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AN

EXTRACT

OF

LETTERS

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By Mrs. L****.

To John Brewer Curate of Westharptree,

Somerset.

BRISTOL:

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MDCCLXIX.

LETTERS

She being dead, yet speaketh.

Heb. 11. 4.

Not that I incline
To fix my faith on any one divine;
But man, or woman, whoe'er it be,
That speaks true doctrine is a Light to me.
Where truth alone is interest and aim,
Who would regard a person or a name?
Or in the search of it impartial, scoff,
If scorn the meanest instrument thereof?

Dr. Byrom's Epistle To a
Gent. of the Temple.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

READER.

THE perſon who publiſh'd theſe letters about twelve years ago, obſerves the Writer of them, "never ſuppoſed they would be made public, but put down the ſentiments of her heart, in the confidence of friendſhip. This may excuſe the inaccuracies ſome may find: Beſides they are not recommended as patterns of polite epiſtolary correſpondence. Their merit is of another kind. It conſiſts neither in the fineneſs of the language, nor in the elegance of the manner."—I really think it does, as well as "in the goodneſs of the ſentiment." I am not aſhamed to recommend them, as "patterns of truly polite epiſtolary correſpondence:" expreſſing the nobleſt ſentiments in the moſt elegant manner, in the pureſt, yea, and fineſh language. Yet undoubtedly even the beauty of the language is nothing compared to the Spirit which breathes throughout. Happy they who both *taſte* her Spirit and are partakers of it: Who *walk in the light as He is the light*, and know that *the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth from all ſin.*

J. W.

LETTERS

To Mrs. * * * *

YOUR letter, my ever dear friend, has been a great bleſſing to me; that you ſhould write in the ſtyle you now do, filled me with ſuch a ſenſe of mine own unworthineſs, and of the goodneſs of God to me, that it melted my ſtony heart, and drew tears from mine eyes. Oh would the God I adore enable me to be of any help to you, how would my ſoul dilate in thankfulneſs. Bleſſed Redeemer, draw us both, and ſo will we run after thee. Oh Spirit of truth deſcend on thine unworthy ſervants, and make us *fully* ſenſible of the ſeal of our redemption! Convince us ſtill more deeply of our ſins, and make us ſtill more fully to know, that they are waſhed away by the blood of Jeſus. Thou knoweſt the burdens we labour under, the diſſipations of our thoughts, our wanderings in prayer, our ſpiritual ſloth, and all the hardneſs of our hearts. Stir us up earneſtly to ſeek after the things of God, and fix our inconſtant minds. Thou knoweſt that we deſire (for this deſire comes from thee) that the love of the father may abide in our hearts. We beg thine aſſiſtance that we may eager-

ly ſeek after this love. Oh teach us the prayer of faith, and enable us conſtantly and undauntedly to preſs forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling. Be thou our guide, be thou our comforter for ever and for ever. *Amen. Amen.*

What a taſk have you laid upon me? I watch over you! I your guide! This quite overcomes me. I cannot bear it. Oh, my love, there is no one ſo much wants a guide and a director as I do. Sure this letter of yours was particularly deſigned by providence to humble me; but unworthy as I am, I will by the grace of God ſtrive to do every thing you deſire of me: but then you muſt return the ſame to me, and take me into the number of thoſe you watch over. Let us go hand in hand in theſe paths which lead to everlaſting life. What ſhall I ſay to quicken your ſteps? It was ſaid to me ſince I ſaw you, by Mr. *** "I hope ſtill to "have a great deal more pleaſure from you, by ſee-"ing you *preſs forward.*" Think theſe words were addreſſed to you by the ſame perſon. Oh what a bleſſing of God accompanies the words of one who is uniformly a Chriſtian, of one who ſpends and is ſpent for the ſervice of his maſter, of one who has no one view but the glory of God and the ſalvation of ſouls. Who would not ſtrive earneſtly to follow ſo bright an example? The very ſight of ſuch a perſon animates the ſoul in its warfare. Oh what ſoul, which is the leaſt alive to God, would not even *agonize* to be perfectly renewed after the image of Chriſt? Is your heart, is my heart ſo dead, that this will not affect it?——Alas, I grieve for mine own — may God give me to rejoice for yours.

I have time for no more. May the bleſſing and influence of the ever-adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be continually with your ſoul.

I am your ever-affectionate, &c.

My

My dear Friend.

I Think you are now through divine grace, ſtrong enough to bear what I am going to ſay to you, that I have long ſeen a mixture of pride and vanity even in the beſt of your performances; but I could hardly allow myſelf to believe it. What! have I often ſaid, ſhall I judge ſo of her, whom every body admires for her ſurprizing modeſty and humility? Is it not becauſe ſhe is more excellent than myſelf, and therefore I am ſeeking to find ſome fault in her? Then I have often prayed to God not to ſuffer my ſoul to be deceived by any ſiniſter views, and to perfect in you what was wanting. And this I truſt he will do for us both, if we keep the longing eye of our ſouls ſteadily fixed upon him. Oh for holineſs of heart! Let us labour, my dear companion, for holineſs, as a dying ſinner labours for life.

I had yeſterday a moſt delightful letter from Mr. ***. It ſent me to my knees ſo convinced of my black ingratitude to my heavenly father, that I could neither find words nor thoughts ſufficient to expreſs my unworthineſs; yet at the ſame time my heart was full of thankſgiving, under a ſenſe of his unbounded mercies. O help me, my dear friend, to be more and more thankful! Such advantages — deareſt Jeſus, how juſtly great muſt be my condemnation, if I do not make ſuitable improvements. Take the latter part of Mr. *** letter, apply it to yourſelf conſtantly, every minute if poſſible. "You have need therefore to watch and pray al-"ways, and then eſpecially when you might ſeem "to have leaſt need. You have reaſon therefore "to fear always: for your enemies are always "watching. But you have reaſon likewiſe to re-"joice always, becauſe he that keepeth you never "ſleeps."

My

My dear Friend,

I Have read your letter with tears, and earneſt prayers to God for you, and for myſelf. We are both unworthy creatures; indeed, my love, we are, *more* unworthy than we can either expreſs or conceive. Oh let us fly to the blood of ſprinkling. There and there alone can we find help.

Thanks be to God, that you have a clear view of your own heart. This is a moſt profitable proſpect, though a moſt dreadful one. Think me not cruel, when I wiſh that the Holy Spirit may *deeply* wound your ſoul with a ſenſe of its corruptions. The deeper the conviction, the firmer the peace that follows.

I hardly know how to believe you, when you tell me you are hurried away by deſires after worldly happineſs. Is it poſſible? Alas, my friend, pardon the harſhneſs of the expreſſion, if the love of the world is in your heart, you are only a *painted ſepulchre*, beautiful indeed outwardly, but within ——— My dear creature, I cannot bear to think this — A Chriſtian be hurried away with deſires and endeavours after worldly happineſs! If St. *Paul*'s character of a chriſtian is right, how far are you from being a chriſtian? "Ye are dead, "ſays he, and your life is hid with Chriſt in God."

May not theſe violent ragings of pride, vanity, *&c.* you ſpeak of, be ſome of the laſt ſtruggles of a dying enemy? When the ſtrong man armed keepeth his houſe, his goods are in peace, but when he that is ſtronger comes upon him to overcome him, and to take from him that armour in which he truſted, no wonder the houſe is in a tumult. And this I hope is your preſent caſe. But beware, my dear ſoul, of thinking, that you never ſhall be otherwiſe.

otherwiſe. Limit not the grace of God. He has only to ſay, *Peace, be ſtill,* and immediately the winds and ſea obey him. "But how to obtain "this peace?" Oh my dear friend, will you follow the advice of the meaneſt and moſt unworthy of the ſervants of Chriſt? Look upon yourſelf as being only *now* fully convinced of your guilt and dreadful condition. Look upon yourſelf as a *poor, loſt, helpleſs, miſerable creature.* Set before your eyes your ſins, with all their aggravations; and when your ſoul is weighed down to the duſt under a ſenſe of your own vileneſs, then throw yourſelf at the foot of the croſs: there lie as a loathſome leper before the almighty healer: there let your parched ſoul *gaſp* (with the utmoſt ſtretch of all your faculties) after thoſe life-giving ſtreams which flowed from Chriſt's hands, his feet, his pierced ſide; and there keep the eye of your mind fixed, until you have a freſh ſenſe of his pardoning love, until the ſtill ſmall voice be heard in your ſoul—"Be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee."

I Was in hopes, my dear, that I had cauſe to think you had gained ground, but if I was miſtaken am very ſorry. God forbid however that you ſhould have gone back: I muſt not for my own eaſe believe that. The reaſon for your not finding ſo much comfort as uſual flowing from the croſs, is becauſe you lay yourſelf too much out upon *outward* things. I doubt not but your own will is indeed very powerful, and it will ever be ſo, while you indulge yourſelf in caſtle-building. Let your ſchemes be ever ſo good, they are (unleſs God had given you the means and power to perform them) merely the creatures of your own will; and

I don't

I don't know any thing that ſelf-will more delights in, than in theſe imaginary good projects. Believe me, my dear ſoul, I ſpeak from experience. There is nothing more encourages ſelf-will, pride, and every temper we ought to ſubdue, than theſe ſchemes. For God's ſake ſtrive to get the better of this folly. I know your temper is naturally inclined to it, and therefore you ought to be more particularly watchful. Cannot you, my love, keep your thoughts fixed on the preſent moment in a conſtant dependance on the leadings of the Spirit of God, and only wiſhing that every ſucceeding moment may bring a new acceſſion of grace to your ſoul, without fixing on the particular means, by which you would have it come. When the will is in this total reſignation to God, it brings a peace to the ſoul, which cannot be deſcribed.

I don't like your going to *Vaux-hall*. I think you ought to try every poſſible means, to get off. Suppoſe you were to be ſincere, and own it was againſt your conſcience. Pray God direct you what to do. If you are really *forced* to go, God will preſerve your heart from the pollutions of the place. If this is the caſe, I think you will be in leſs danger of being hurt there, than in your viſit to Mrs. *** : for in this viſit you will lie expoſed to the worſt enemy you have, that is, *yourſelf*. With thoſe good people, whom you love and admire, and who love and admire you, you will without the moſt conſtant watchfulneſs, be continually falling into ſelf-ſeeking and ſelf-applauſe.

I fear, my love, you will ſoon think me too plain in my ſpeaking; but I cannot anſwer it to my conſcience, ſince what haſt paſt between us, not to warn you of every thing which ſeems to me to prevent your progreſs in grace. Don't imagine though, that I wiſh you would not make this viſit to Mrs. *** ; quite the contrary; but I wiſh you to keep the moſt conſtant guard upon your own heart, that what

what ſhould be for your health be not unto you an occaſion of falling.

I am your ever ſincere and affectionate, &c.

My dear Friend,

I Thank God, that you now ſee the danger of wandering imaginations in a clearer light; but I cannot gueſs what ſchemes a heart like yours (which I ſhould hope was *deſirous* of nothing but what immediately tended to increaſe in it the love of God) can purſue, which are not for what we call *doing good*. Depend upon it, my dear, if you can by an act of your will waſte a thought on any future view of happineſs, that regards only your ſituation in this world, you are yet far from the kingdom of God. To a ſoul, that has but the *loweſt* ſenſe of the pardoning love of God, every thing that does not lead to a greater ſenſe of this love is inſipid. Outward things, according to the preſent circumſtances we are in, ought to be attended to with prudence, though not with anxiouſneſs; but that ſoul which runs out after them in *future* ought to *tremble*. My dear creature, are we not every moment on the brink of eternity, and may plunge *in* the next, for ought we know. What then have we to do but every moment to graſp after new degrees of grace, new power over ſin, a ſtill higher ſenſe of the love of God ſhed abroad in our hearts? "Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord"—Alas! what is a life of ſixty or ſeventy years (ſuppoſing we could be certain of ſo many) to attain univerſal holineſs? And ſhall we loſe a moment? Outwardly we muſt a great many, but ſtill our hearts may be gaining ground in the ſteady purſuit

of

of that end, for which we were created, and to which we have ſuch glorious encouragements. What! ſhall Chriſt cry out to us in vain, "Give "me thy heart?" Or ſhall we dare to divide that heart, which coſt him ſo dear? Oh my friend, be jealous for your redeeming God. Suffer not that ſoul, for which he ſhed his precious blood, to ſtray one moment from him.

I am ſorry you found pleaſure at *Vaux-hall*. I could not have believed it had you not told me ſo yourſelf. I ſee, my love, I have thought far too highly of you. What a frightful diſtance is there ſtill between you, and a chriſtian! Could any one who had the mind which was in Chriſt, have felt pleaſure where they ſaw God diſhonoured, and their fellow-creatures running headlong to deſtruction? You had reaſon indeed to be aſhamed, and thank God that you was ſo. The curioſity in regard to the aſtronomical inſtruments might diſtract your mind for a longer time, but your taking delight in theſe did not ſhew ſuch an exceſſive depravity of heart, as the other: for aſtronomy is only *accidentally* made a means of diſhonouring God, and hurting the ſouls of men; but *Vaux-Hall* is *neceſſarily* ſo.

I am your ever affectionate, &c.

I Write, my love, to you to thank you for the pleaſure you gave me laſt *Thurſday*, and ſtill to urge you more and more continually to preſs forwards. Young as you are, you may perhaps be very near the end of your courſe, and the time given you to work in *may*, for ought you know, be very nearly elapſed. That form of yours, which now delights the eyes of your friend, and ſeems to promiſe

to a long

a long continuance of health and vigour, may ſoon perhaps become defaced and loathſome meat for crawling worms, and that ſoul, that precious and immortal ſoul of yours, which is now far from loving its creator as it ought to do, may ſoon ſtand naked in the ſight of that God, to whom it has been ungrateful—its day of probation paſt—and its lot caſt for a whole eternity. Oh my friend, my deareſt companion in my pilgrimage, I conjure you by all your heart holds dear, that you loſe not a moment! Oh may that God, who is love itſelf, ſo inflame your ſoul with a ſenſe of his love, as may conſume all its droſs, and make it through Chriſt an acceptable ſacrifice to himſelf! I think the laſt time I ſaw you I had the ſatisfaction of obſerving leſs of *ſelf-ſeeking* in you, than I ever did before. Sure God will give me greatly to rejoice in you. Farewel. Whenever, my love, I think too well of you, fail not to tell me, and take ſhame to yourſelf for deceiving me.

I am yours, &c.

My dear Friend,

I Thank you for your letters, and rejoice at a great part of the account you give me. You have been very happy indeed; and it ſeems to me, that God gave you this happineſs as preparatory to the trials, which were to enſue, and if you ſhould after this goodneſs of God towards you grieve his Holy Spirit, by ſuffering your heart to indulge any temper, which you know to be contrary to his will, what words would be ſtrong enough to paint your black ingratitude? I will deal plainly with you. I think you are now in a moſt dangerous ſituation.

Every thing around you will conſpire to tempt you to the ſin which moſt eaſily beſets you, and therefore you muſt not be *one moment* off your guard. You muſt pray without ceaſing, even in the fulleſt ſenſe of the words, and conſtantly ſtrive to have ſtrongly painted in your imagination *Jeſus Chriſt*, and him *crucified*. There is nothing I think more tends to humble us, than the conſideration of the ſufferings of Chriſt. When you find yourſelf going to ſay or do any thing with a view to praiſe, think, this temper, this vanity of mine added to the weight of my Saviour's ſufferings, and made more *bitter* his cup of *bitterneſs*. Oh, if you had a ſoul capable of feeling, if you have one ſpark of gratitude, can you think this, and *ſin?* Was you now ſtanding on *Mount Calvary* near the croſs of the bleſſed Jeſus (ſuppoſe the dreadful deed was but now performing) and you ſaw the Redeemer of the world juſt nailed to his croſs, ſay, would you help to drive the nails ſtill deeper? Would you preſs the thorns cloſer to his ſacred temples? Would you help to increaſe that load, which made him cry out, "My God, "my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" Does not your ſoul ſhudder at the thought? O my friend, would you not rather die, gladly die, for this your ſuffering Lord? Would you not gladly be cut in ten thouſand pieces to ſave *him* one pang? I know you would. And will you not ſtrive againſt that ſin, which increaſed his ſufferings? Will you not ſtrive, my love? —— Yes, ſure you will. Is not every thing we can give up by far too ſmall a return for what this Redeemer has done for us? And ſhall we not give this little? Above all ſhall we not give what moſt of all ſeparates us from him, our *ſelf-love*, and *ſelf-ſeeking?* Think my friend when any one is hinting to you, how extraordinary you are—"this perſon is ignorantly driving me from my "Saviour." And if you ſhould, which God forbid, find yourſelf tempted to indulge a vain complacency in their applauſe, think immediately how

their

their praiſe would be turned into contempt did they know your heart as it really is, and bluſh for thus deceiving them. Recollect ſome of the mean motives which perhaps have been the ſprings of ſome of your moſt admired words and actions, and let your ſoul within you be humbled to the duſt. And, my dear, I beg you will be careful how you draw praiſe upon yourſelf by praiſing others. This is what I am very apt to fall into; and therefore I am the more ſenſible of its hurtfulneſs. And beware how you ſuffer yourſelf to attempt explaining nice points of doctrine, unleſs it is evident there will be good done by it, and then you may hope God will preſerve you from the pride, which generally accompanies this diſplay of the capacity. May you conſtantly walk in the light of God's countenance, and go on conquering, and to conquer.

I Am glad, my dear friend, that your viſit to *** has been of ſuch benefit to you; and I pray God to continue it to your ſoul, and not to ſuffer theſe impreſſions to wear off. Temptations doubtleſs will attend every ſituation we are in, but the ſoul that reſts ſecure in the love of God will eaſily conquer them. I wiſh you may find more and more benefit from the church prayers: they are for human compoſitions very excellent, and I believe the beſt *form* of prayers that ever was put together. I cannot reproach you for that which God has pardoned, but you certainly ought now to be more watchful, that you fall not again: for then great indeed would be your condemnation. The danger which may accrue to you by going to Miſs *** will I find be known to you by experience *only*. She is certainly a good creature herſelf, and I love her; but there is a ſpirit haunts her lodgings which is

abſolutely contrary to the ſpirit I am ſeeking after. She is not capable, my dear, of watching your words with any ill deſign. Her only view is to find out your errors, and if poſſible cure you of them. I doubt not but if you could converſe with her alone, and keep clear of diſputes, ſhe might be of great uſe to you, and I hope God will bleſs this and every other means to the good of your ſoul. The moſt excellent people in the world will be of little avail, unleſs his Spirit aſſiſts, and with this there is nothing ſo weak or mean, but what may tend to increaſe his love in our hearts. For my own part ſilence and ſolitude ſeem at preſent beſt for me, and I am more hurt by ſome religious people, whom I converſe with, than by the people of the world. Indeed there is ſcarce any, who does not in ſome meaſure hurt me, except Mr. ***. Numberleſs are the ſnares that lie in our way to the heavenly kingdom. 'Tis truly a warfare, and a very difficult one, but the crown that awaits us at the end is well worth the ſtriving for, even unto blood. Beſides the encouragements and comforts we find in the way are glorious: ſure I am that *Alexander* never found ſo much joy in all his conqueſts, as the ſoul that preſſes after the foot-ſteps of Chriſt does in one conqueſt over ſelf-will. There is more delight in ſuffering for God, than in reigning with the world. To claſp the croſs of Chriſt cloſe to the heart is more happineſs than angels can give; and what inexpreſſible ſatisfaction is it to a ſoul, whoſe every faculty loves its Redeemer, to cry out,

Give me to feel thine agonies,
One drop of thy ſad cup afford;
I fain with thee would ſympathize,
And ſhare the ſufferings of my Lord.

Oh God of unſpeakable mercy, unbounded love, how little is all we can do or ſuffer for thee! Oh

that

that we might not have a thought, nor even a pulſe beat, but for our God! What is all that earth or heaven itſelf can give in compariſon of thee? Oh uncreated beauty, how does every other excellence fade away at thy preſence! How does a taſte of thy love make every other love inſipid! and a ray of thy light darken the brighteſt of created beings! Oh when, when ſhall our ſouls be wholly ſwallowed up in thee! When ſhall we know thee even alſo as we are known! Thou knoweſt the deſire of our hearts, thou ſeeſt how our ſouls ſtretch, and pant after thee, even to fainting! Oh give us to drink of the waters of life, even in this our pilgrimage, until we come to drink freely of them from that river, which proceedeth out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb for ever and ever. *Amen*, Lord Jeſus.

My beloved Friend,

I Have been admiring the goodneſs of God to you, in ordering your being at *L* *** at a time, when it muſt, inſtead of being hurtful, be profitable to your ſoul. The attending the ſick bed of a dear relation in danger of death, is a moſt glorious time for exerciſing a number of chriſtian graces. Such a ſcene as this keeps the mind in a moſt proper temper, humble, recollected, ſerious; and in your particular circumſtances this illneſs of *** has freed you from moſt of the ſnares you apprehended. How does every thing work together for good to thoſe who love God! and how ungrateful is that heart, which does not ſtrive more and more to love him in deed and in truth! What, my love, are the inward temptations you complain of, and what are thoſe unaccountable ſcruples? The beſt thing you

can do is not to argue about them in your own mind, but immediately fly to prayer; and if you cannot pray, only wiſh earneſtly to pray. 'Tis right, that you ſhould think yourſelf the vileſt creature breathing, and I am every day more and more convinced, that every ſoul which really loves God muſt neceſſarily in its own particular think the ſame: and in whatever proportion the love of God increaſes in the ſoul, in the ſame proportion will the ſenſe of its own vileneſs and helpleſſneſs increaſe, 'till at laſt it is in a manner annihilated before God. This is a point which the wiſdom of the world cannot underſtand, and which no ſcheme of doctrine can teach the heart; but when we truly know Jeſus Chriſt crucified, then we can truly cry out, What! *to me* ſuch love? to the vileſt and moſt ungrateful of all creatures? O whence ſuch love to me?

I grieve for the ſin you fell into. Had the temper of your mind been really charitable, you certainly could not lightly have ſpoken evil of any one. Nothing is more contrary to the true ſpirit of the goſpel, than this want of univerſal love, and yet there is nothing ſo common even among thoſe who in moſt other reſpects are unblameable. How ought we every moment to watch! Oh when ſhall we indeed be renewed after the image of Chriſt. *Adieu.*

WHAT, my dear companion, can I write ſo animating as your preſent circumſtances? God ſeems, I think, in a moſt peculiar manner to watch over your ſoul for good. What intereſting, what heart-affecting ſcenes have you gone through? The account I have had of your *** death, has made me ſee the goodneſs of God to you in the

ſtrongeſt

ſtrongeſt light, and I am ready to ſhudder, when I think that it is poſſible, even after all this, that you ſhould again be ungrateful. Oh watch every moment! Think what horrors and agonies you muſt feel, if you ſhould now ſuffer your heart to turn aſide from this tender and merciful God! The circumſtances you are now in are like five talents given to your care. Remember you are to gain to them five talents more, or expect to hear theſe dreadful words — *Thou ſlothful and wicked ſervant*, &c. Your heavenly Father ſeems to be making a plain way before your face. I ſee you in a light almoſt *prophetical*. I rejoice, and yet I tremble. You ſeem pointed out, I think, as an inſtrument in the hands of God for the converſion of Miſs ***; but here you will be in danger from your old enemies, pride, and love of teaching, and above all that ſelf-ſetting-up which you have found ſo difficult to overcome. Oh my dear love, fail not ever hour of the day to pray particularly for humility. I truſt you are not in danger from any increaſe of fortune. No ſurely. The heart of my beloved friend cannot be ſo mean and low, as to pride itſelf in droſs and dirt. Perhaps you will find ſome difficulties in regard to the tempers of your ***; how neceſſary will it be for you in this caſe to place conſtantly before your eyes the meekneſs and lowlineſs of the Lamb of God? And fear not, you will in all theſe things be more than conqueror through him, who has loved you.

I Pity you, my dear friend; I ſaw yeſterday that your head was full, and your heart not ſo warm towards God as it ſometimes is. Oh when ſhall we be free from theſe diſtractions? Or rather when ſhall our love to our Redeemer be ſo intenſe, that our hearts may be conſtantly fixed on him, and we

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(as it were) walk through the fire without being burnt? I remember having ſometimes ſaid to you the beginning of laſt ſummer, "There is more a "vaſt deal in faith than we all imagine;" and though, thanks to the free grace of God, we both know more of faith now, than we did at that time, yet I may ſtill repeat the ſaying, and may continue to repeat it, till our eyes are fully opened in eternity. "All things are poſſible to him that be-"lieveth," ſaid the God of truth; and why then do not you and I conquer all ſin? Becauſe *we do not believe*. The unbounded riches of the grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus are hardly more aſtoniſhing, than the perverſneſs of that ſoul, which will not fully truſt in them. Chriſt ſtands ever ready to ſave to the uttermoſt, if we will but believe, that he can, and will do it; and we draw back and ſhrink from his redeeming hand. We ſuffer the dark clouds of our fallen nature to obſcure the glorious light of the promiſes of God. And though our heads may be fully convinced of their truth, and we may have ſome deſires of attaining them, yet there is in the centre of our ſouls an hidden root of unbelief, which juſt as we are going to lay hold on the prize whiſpers—"How can theſe "things be?" and then we ſink. I have heard it obſerved of the eagle, that ſhe holds her young ones full againſt the bright beams of the mid-day ſun: if they behold it ſtedfaſtly ſhe nouriſhes them, but if they turn away their heads or ſhut their eyes, ſhe daſhes them to the ground. There is ſomething very ſtriking in this. A nominal believer, who makes a profeſſion of holineſs, has all the outward marks of a true believer, as theſe daſtard eagles have of the others, but he cannot look ſtedfaſtly at the glorious beams of the ſun of righteouſneſs: and how dreadful is the conſequence? Oh my love, how ought we to watch and pray! How careful ought we to be not to loſe ſight for one moment of our immaterial ſun, leſt the eye of our

minds

minds ſhould by that means contract a dimneſs and weakneſs, which might render us incapable of ſtedfaſtly beholding him, when he ſhall appear in all the fulneſs of his glory. May the God of mercy preſerve you in all temptations, and be your portion in time and in eternity.

My dear Friend,

I Praiſe God with my whole heart for your happineſs and ſtrength, and I pray him to increaſe it every moment. Oh may that bleſſed peace never leave your ſoul: it is eternal life begun, and ten thouſands laid in the balance with this peace would be all lighter than vanity. It is a glorious ſign, that in outward troubles, or inward temptations, you can leave the means of your deliverance intirely to God, without ſuffering your imagination to run out after the manner in which you probably may be delivered. Oh that we could always venture ourſelves upon the mercies of our God! Then would he indeed work wonders for us — wonders which we now can ſcarce believe, though the God of truth himſelf declares them unto us. And this God will ſurely keep you in the dangers to which you are going to be expoſed, if you will be watchful to keep the eye of your mind conſtantly turned towards him, and wait and hang upon him, as a little child on its fond parent, drawing all your help, all your comfort from him, and him alone. If you have but little outward retirement, ſhut more cloſely the door of your heart, and there in its inmoſt receſſes commune with your God, and Redeemer, there be continually crying unto him — Lord thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee; thou knoweſt, O life and joy of my ſoul,

ſoul, that I deſire nothing but to do thy perfect will, and to be conformed to the likeneſs of thy ſufferings, as well as to the likeneſs of thy reſurrection. Oh crucify in me the whole body of ſin! Give me an humble, a mortified, and child-like ſpirit, and in thine own good time perfect the work thou haſt begun in my ſoul.

As to examples which are not good, I hope I may ſay, that all the effect they can have upon my beloved friend (in her preſent happy ſtate of mind) will be to drive her nearer to her God, and in that nearneſs what comfort does the believing ſoul find?

What tho' earth and hell engage
To ſhake that ſoul with fear;
Calmly it defies the rage
Of perſecution near.

Suffering faith ſhall brighter grow,
As gold when in the furnace tried:
Only Jeſus will we know,
And Jeſus crucified.

Yes, my love, let thoſe who ſtile themſelves our beſt friends join with the world in calling us *mopes*, and *enthuſiaſts*. Still ſtedfaſtly fixed on the rock which cannot be moved, we will endure, nay joyfully take up the reproach for his ſake, who hid not his bleſſed face from ſhame and ſpitting for our ſakes, to make us (accurſed and loſt creatures) heirs of eternal glory. Oh that his ſtrength may but accompany us, and the light of his countenance continually abide with us; and then we ſhall not fail to go on conquering and to conquer. *Amen.*

For God's ſake avoid diſputes of all kinds. I was delighted the laſt time you was with me, to obſerve that you was greatly altered for the better in this reſpect. Think not that I will omit to pray for you, and fail not to pray for me. Oh my friend, ſoon will time be ſwallowed up in eternity.

I readily

I Readily believe you, my dear friend, that you have not brought back the ſame heart you carried with you: for I thought I diſcovered the two laſt times I ſaw you, a falling off from the grace you had and the happy ſtate of mind you had been in; but for God's ſake ſtrive to recover yourſelf before you are ſunk lower. Think how dreadful your caſe will be, if you ſhould ſo grieve the Spirit of God, as to cauſe him to depart from you. I know your heart to be ungrateful and deceitful, and you yourſelf know full well how much it is ſo; but fear not to ſearch into its moſt hidden corruptions. Was it ten times more vile and pollutted than it is, the blood of Jeſus is all-ſufficient to cleanſe it. And my dear ſoul, let me intreat of you earneſtly to ſeek after a clear and conſtant ſenſe of the pardoning love of God. This only can enable you to trample all temptations under your feet: believe me, unleſs you really walk in the light of his countenance, you never can conquer all the powers and works of darkneſs. Oh ſeek the peace which paſſes all underſtanding. You have need enough of it, I am ſure, conſidering the many ſnares you walk in. I really fear you do not diligently ſeek after God: 'tis very certain they that ſeek ſhall find; and therefore that the Redeemer is not fully manifeſted in your ſoul is entirely owing to your ſloth and negligence. How is it poſſible for you to keep your ground againſt temptations which are continually ſtriking upon your ſenſes, unleſs you have *in* you the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen? When our underſtandings are clear in goſpel doctrines, we are too apt to imagine our hearts are ſo. My dear friend, for God's ſake deceive not yourſelf. Oh ſuffer not your ſoul to reſt,

reſt, till you can ſay with full aſſurance of faith, "My ſins are forgiven." Depend upon it this is the firſt ſtep in true chriſtianity. Oh cry to God every moment from the bottom of your heart, and he will do more for you, than you can either aſk or think. I am a witneſs of his free and boundleſs mercy. For ſome days paſt I have been in the wilderneſs, my ſoul weary, faint, and deſolate; no rejoicing in God; not one ray from the ſun of righteouſneſs: but this morning, this bleſſed morning, my beloved returned to my ſoul, and I rejoiced with joy unſpeakable, and could ſay with the fulleſt aſſurance, "My ſins are done away—Chriſt is mine—"God the Father is my reconciled father—God "the Holy Ghoſt is my comforter and guide." Oh my friend, my heart is now ſo overwhelmed I can ſcarce write. I could repeat a thouſand and a thouſand times over—*Chriſt is mine.* My ſoul is ready to ſpring out of its priſon, and I could at this moment face death in all its moſt horrible proſpects to go to my Redeemer. Oh death, where is thy ſting? Oh grave, where is thy victory? My dear love, you know not what you loſe by your negligence. Oh ſeek, ſtrive, agonize; could you ſuffer the utmoſt tortures in body or mind, they would be all as nothing to gain one moment of this ſweetneſs: and Oh pray for me, that I may not by ſinning grieve the bleſſed comforter, and loſe my preſent peace. God be with you my dear friend. God bleſs you both now and for ever.

My dear friend,

I Mourn for you, and may you mourn too from your very inmoſt ſoul, till God himſelf gives you the true comfort. Oh thou dear backſlider, what

ſhall

ſhall I ſay? How ſhall I find words ſtrong enough to make a laſting impreſſion on a heart ſo inconſtant, ſo ſlothful, and careleſs? Oh that the Spirit of God would aſſiſt my weak endeavours, and point my otherwiſe unavailing words! You own you do not ſtrive earneſtly: alas I too plainly ſee you do not. But the bleſſed Comforter ſtrives with you, and ſtill you reſiſt and grieve him. How irkſome is it to me always to write the ſame thing? My dear ſoul, for God's ſake be more in earneſt. How can you talk of ſloth and careleſſneſs, when you are ſtanding on the brink of a precipice? Can you promiſe yourſelf another day? And are you fit to die in the ſtate you are now in? Nay, are you not afraid to die? Oh, if the Lord ſhould ſay of you, as of the barren fig-tree, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground," how would you be overwhelmed with dread and confuſion? For you who know ſo well what are the glorious promiſes of the goſpel, to ſuffer your thoughts to run upon worldly things is inexcuſable. It ſeems ſtrange, that you ſhould think you love Chriſt more than you did, when you was in a better ſtate; however above all things hold faſt, and ſtrive to increaſe this love, but then at the ſame time take care that you hate ſin in the ſame proportion, and that you ſtrive againſt it with the utmoſt earneſtneſs: for to talk of loving Chriſt, and at the ſame time to give way to ſloth, careleſſneſs, and worldly-mindedneſs, is an abominable mockery. If you are encompaſſed with ten thouſand temptations never fear, ſo your own heart conſent not to them. Your bleſſed maſter will ſurely help you, if you can but truſt him: and never give way, to that *ſeeming* impoſſibility of praying. Though perhaps you cannot pray with comfort, or with any kind of connection, yet if you be ever ſo diſtracted you may ſurely cry, Lord, have mercy upon me—Jeſus, pity me. Or even ſuppoſing you could not do this from your heart, aſk yourſelf whether you do not deſire to pray; and if you do, thank God for that deſire,

and the next thought will be a prayer. Could you not make the increaſe of your family profitable, by joining at ſtated times of the day in ſome act of devotion? If it were but for one quarter of an hour at a time, there would doubtleſs be a bleſſing attending it. Suppoſe you were to ſing an hymn together, or by turns pray, either from ſome form of prayer, or, what would be better, extempore. You ought rather to be ſilent, and be thought a mope, than to join in trifling diſcourſe. Conſider, my love, you are to ſet an example to your young friends; and fear not but God will deliver you from this bondage into the glorious liberty of his children. The feeble truſt you now have is the work of his bleſſed Spirit, and he will increaſe it into an holy confidence. Let not therefore your comfort ſicken, but truſt in that Jeſus, who died that you might live; to whoſe all-merciful boſom I commit you,

And am your affectionate Friend, &c.

My dear Friend,

I Hope your preſent circumſtances do not prevent your conſtant watching over your own heart, and preſſing forward in the way of holineſs. In the midſt of all theſe proſpects death may come! And are you fit to die? We cannot too often aſk ourſelves this queſtion, we cannot be too ſerious. There is only a moment between us and eternity. May the Lord Jeſus ſo prepare us, that at whatever hour he calls we may be ready, our lamps trimmed, and we ourſelves as thoſe who wait for the bridegroom. Adieu, my dear. May the Almighty preſerve you from all evil.

OF

OF what ſervice, my dear love, can any thing I ſay be of to you? I have tried all means in my power to keep your mind more ſteady, but in vain. If God has at any time ſo bleſſed my letters, that they have made any impreſſion on you, it has gone off in two or three days: and when you have had thoſe great benefits indeed of converſing with living chriſtians, though for a time you have been raiſed and lively, yet you have ſoon ſunk into your former ſloth and careleſſneſs. There muſt certainly be ſome hidden corruption in your heart, which cauſes this inconſtancy. I often ſtudy you as I would a book, but you are in truth one of the moſt puzzling books I ever met with. I often rejoice to ſee in you (as I think) an increaſe of grace, and a decreaſe of that pride and ſelfiſhneſs, which under an appearance of humility you once had to a great degree. The laſt time you was with me, I thought you greatly advanced; and now you are fallen again into pride and ſelfiſhneſs. The Lord Jeſus raiſe you up. Indeed, my dear ſoul, you grieve and wound me. You bring ſorrow in my heart, and tears in my eyes: nay and ſometimes your letters tempt me to impatience; but then I immediately recollect my own continual backſlidings, and the long-ſuffering of God towards me, and can I be impatient with my friend? If your want of retirement it not owing to yourſelf, never lay your coldneſs upon that: for was your heart ſincere, God would ſtrengthen you at all times to look up to him. But if as you ſay, you trifled away your time, and indulged an unwillingneſs to prayer, no wonder God with-held that portion of his grace he would otherwiſe have given you. Depend upon it, whenever you find an unwillingneſs to pray, that of all times is the moſt pro-

per for you to pray in; therefore never ſay on ſuch an occaſion, "I will go read ſome good book, or "do ſome good work, which may perhaps bring "my mind into a better frame for prayer." No, do not ſo fooliſhly; but go, and proſtrate yourſelf before God with all your unwillingneſs; and he will ſoon give you both the will and the power to praiſe him. *Adieu.*

My dear Friend,

IT is impoſſible for me to judge rightly, till I know more of your affair, and then I doubt not, but God, if we aſk in ſincerity, will direct us both to agree in our ſentiments, as to what will be moſt conducive to your eternal welfare. However thus much I can now ſay, be not unequally yoked with an unbeliever. To marry a man in hopes of making him a chriſtian, will be leading yourſelf into temptation. The advantages you ſpeak of may doubtleſs be great bleſſings to you, if you are very certain you can enjoy them. You ought to be very explicit with the perſon, whoever he is, both with regard to your ſentiments and his own heart. You cannot imagine the continual ſnares you will walk in, if you are joined to one, who is not joined to Chriſt; eſpecially if you have any fondneſs for him. As in a married ſtate there are more allurements to draw the mind from God than in a ſingle one, ſo (if the companion be a chriſtian) there are alſo advantages in it, which perhaps may almoſt make the balance even. But how dreadful will it be, if he who ſhould be your help prove to you an occaſion of falling? Above all things, my dear, try the ſincerity of your own heart. Examine well whether you can accept this offer with a ſingle eye to the glory

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of God, and the good of your own ſoul; and fear not, if you aſk counſel of God in faith nothing wavering, that he will give you freedom of mind, either to accept or refuſe as will be moſt profitable for you.

I do not wonder that your ſoul is at preſent diſtracted with worldly thoughts. An affair of this kind always occaſions a thouſand diſtractions, eſpecially where it is in ſuſpenſe. I fear your increaſe of company does not at all add to your ſpiritual happineſs. The Lord Jeſus bleſs you: I pity you. What need have we of continual aſſiſtance from above? How do we walk as on burning coals? O let us ſtrive for that ſtate of mind, in which we can ſay, nothing gives me pain but what is contrary to the will of God, and tends o draw my ſoul from him; and nothing gives me pleaſure, but as it is agreeable to his will, and tends to draw my ſoul nearer to him. *Adieu.*

My dear Soul,

I Am glad to write to you once more under the name of ***, and I hope God will give me ſtrength to ſay all I wiſh at this important juncture. Important it is indeed to you; and the nearer the time approaches, the more I feel for you. Alas, you are now plunging into difficulties, which you can have no notion of until you experience them. You will have need of more than double watchfulneſs. Oh cry earneſtly to God for grace and ſtrength to keep your ſoul from ſinking under the deluſive arguments, which your three grand enemies, the world, the fleſh, and the devil will be continually attacking you with in your new ſtate of life. You know, my love, in all our inter-

courſe, I have not failed to ſet before you the diſadvantages and diſtractions you muſt neceſſarily meet with in a married life. This I thought it my duty to do, though your intentions in regard to marriage were always founded upon chriſtian motives. Had I found you inclined to dedicate yourſelf more particularly to God in a ſingle ſtate, I ſhould doubtleſs have encouraged that inclination; but as this was not the caſe, and I did not dare abſolutely to diſſuade any one from marrying, I have therefore only ſtrove to guard you againſt the evils attending that condition, and pray God grant you may find them overbalanced by the good. The firſt evil, which people are apt to fall into when they marry, is an extreme ſelfiſhneſs: this I have ſeen moſt flagrant inſtances of, but then the people were not chriſtians. Oh my friend, remember you have taken upon you the ſacred name of chriſtian. The next thing which our ſex in particular is very ſubject to, is a pretty indolence of ſoul, and a kind of hugging themſelves as though they were become people of vaſt conſequence; and then all they ſay or do, and every thing which belongs to them, is of importance. You will think perhaps there is no danger of your falling into any thing ſo low and ſilly as this; but do not think ſo, for without extreme watchfulneſs it will ſteal imperceptibly upon you, and if you once grow important, the floodgates of wordly-mindedneſs will be ſet open, and your faith, your love, and peace, will be borne away by the impetuous torrent. The Lord Jeſus bleſs you and keep you, and grant that in all the changes of this mortal life, your heart may there be fixed where true joys are to be found.

Your ever-affectionate

My dear Friend,

I Know not how to aſſume to myſelf the character you mention, and yet I dare not neglect to do any thing, which you tell me may be of benefit to your ſoul. I know God can convey bleſſings by the meaneſt inſtrument, and relying wholly on his power and goodneſs, I enter again into this correſpondence. You complain that I have not *lately* been ſo watchful over you as uſual: In writing I certainly have not, and you know the reaſon; but as to ſpeaking, if I have there failed, it is entirely owing to my being ſo apt to think highly of you. I fear in this I may have dealt with you as with my own heart — judged too favourably of both. May God give me a clearer inſight both into you and into myſelf.

I doubt not but your preſent condition contributes greatly to your being more in earneſt, and you have need to lay up all the ſtrength you can againſt what may be a time of trial indeed. I am glad you found ſuch a bleſſing on *Sunday*. I doubt not but the greater degree of light and joy you have, the more you will be aſſaulted by temptations, and theſe perhaps not only of a ſtrange, but alſo of an impertinent and ridiculous kind. The devil will ſometimes play the buffoon: But I have found the beſt way of dealing with theſe temptations was not to combat them, but to let them paſs through the mind, as you would let a troubleſome croud of people paſs by your door without regarding them.

The ſpeaking evil of your neighbour before you are aware, though it has not all the blackneſs of premeditated evil-ſpeaking, yet it is a ſore ſign, that

that you have not that ſpirit of love, without which the higheſt attainments are but as ſounding braſs, and as a tinkling cymbal. I often am ſorry to ſee how much this divine temper is wanting amongſt religious people. For my own part, I ſtand ſelf-condemned in this, though it is a ſin, which I have even a natural averſion to; and I fear there are but few hearts in which this root of bitterneſs does not grow almoſt imperceptible. However, the captain of our ſalvation can give us to tread even this enemy under our feet. Let us therefore go on, nothing diſcouraged, truſting in his help, and following his ſteps, until we apprehend that, for which we are apprehended of this divine leader.

Your ever affectionate and faithful, &c.

My dear Friend,

MR. *V.* has deſired me to meet Dr. *** at his houſe; but though I honour the character of that worthy man, yet I rather *fear*, than *deſire* to do this. I really now dread the being ſet up as ſomething to be thought well of. I ſee ſuch a depth of pride and ſelf love in my own heart, that I dread anything, which can give the leaſt food to theſe helliſh tempers. I am well ſatisfied, that there can be no perfect peace, no perfect love, till theſe be done away. Was not the bleſſed Jeſus *meek* and *lowly* of heart? Was not he deſpiſed and rejected? And we? Oh, my dear love, tremble for yourſelf and for me. We are eſteemed, admired, and ſought after. Do we not, think you, tread upon burning coals? How dangerous, how difficult to act for the glory of God, without ſacrificing ſomething to ſelf? And this ſelf

is all that ſeparates from God—this ſelf is all that keeps the bleſſings both of time and eternity from our ſouls. Oh let us learn, and know and feel, that we are nothing, and that God is all in all. Certain it is that unleſs we die with Chriſt, we cannot riſe to his life. Unleſs we are crucified with him here, we cannot reign with him hereafter. Let us then nail our corrupt nature to his croſs, and continually mortify every temper that is contrary to his perfect will. Suffer we muſt; but the love of God will make all ſufferings ſweet, and his grace will enable us to conquer all difficulties. I rejoice at the victory, which you tell me has been given you over (I ſuppoſe) ſome reigning ſin. Is not this encouragement to preſs forward? If you would preſerve conſtant peace and recollection, look more into your own heart, and lay not out yourſelf too much upon others. I have ſeen ſo much of the ill effects of this, that I dread it both for you and myſelf. Watch continually.

Your ever affectionate, &c.

* *

YOUR letter, my dear life, has given me great pleaſure. This is indeed, as it ought to be. And Oh by no means ſuffer this anxious deſire after God, this thirſt after holineſs to abate; only let it be mixed with that kind of reſignation, which implies a willingneſs to ſuffer, ſo you may be kept from ſin. The pain you ſpeak of *I rejoice in*. Oh my love, this is right; and may you more and more be conformed to Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified. A ſoul thus pained, thus longing, thus ſtrugling for ſalvation, and at the ſame time lying low at the

the foot of the croſs, and crying, "Lord thy will "be done," is an object in which the holy angels rejoice, nay on which God himſelf looks down well pleaſed. To ſuch a ſoul every goſpel bleſſing is near at hand. The ſun of righteouſneſs is on the point of riſing in it with healing in his wings; the eternal comforter is ready to witneſs with it, that it is born of God, and to fill it with that peace, which paſſeth all underſtanding. The bleſſed and adorable Trinity is ready to raiſe it from its fallen ſtate, and to perfect the new creation. What encouraging proſpects! Only let not this happy pain be taken from you by any comforts the world can give, but hold it dear to your heart, as light to your eyes, till God himſelf change it to joy unſpeakable.

I have long thought that to wiſh for any thing, but the ſalvation of our own ſouls and that of others is wrong: becauſe in nothing elſe can we be ſure that our wiſhes are agreeable to the will of God. I do not know how to believe, that you could *wiſh* for more riches; and if the being pleaſed with the thoughts of gain proceeded only from this motive, that you thought God was putting it more in your power to relieve the neceſſities of others, I would not dare to condemn you: but it is ſo difficult to take any ſatisfaction of this kind without ſome mixture of worldly-mindedneſs, that we cannot be too careful in this reſpect; nay we ought rather to fear, leſt we ſhould not be found faithful ſtewards of the talents put into our hands, as knowing, that both in ſpiritual and temporal bleſſings, "To whom "much is given, of them ſhall much be required."

My dear friend,

IF it ſhould pleaſe God to make any thing I write of benefit to your ſoul, I ſhould greatly rejoice, but without that my words will avail nothing. And really the account you give of yourſelf at preſent is ſo ſtrange, that I know not how to ſpeak to you, or whether harſhneſs or love is moſt neceſſary. This I know, that my own ſoul is greatly pained for you, but I dare not flatter you, "If any man hath not the ſpirit of Chriſt, he is none of his;" and doubtleſs to take a pleaſure in expoſing the faults of others is a temper as diſtant from the ſpirit of Chriſt, as hell is from heaven. Believe me, my dear life, if the love of God reigned in your heart, you would rather cover than expoſe the faults even of the vileſt of men. And when obliged for their own good, or the warning of others, to ſpeak to the diſadvantage of any one, you would do it with *fear* and *caution*, at the ſame time looking up to God, leſt any bitterneſs ſhould mix, either with your thoughts or words. *God is love*, and infinite ſtreams of love are perpetually flowing from him through all created nature. His acts of judgment as well as mercy are only acts of love, and deſigned either to remove or to leſſen the evils occaſioned by the fall of angels and of man; and the ſoul which is born of God will as neceſſarily partake of this divine principle of univerſal love, as the child you now carry within you partakes of your corrupt nature. You have great reaſon then to tremble, while this temper has any footing in your ſoul. Don't ſit down contented, becauſe you have intervals of recollection, but wreſtle mightily with God in fervent prayer, until he ſpeak peace to your ſoul,

and

and his love be ſhed abroad in your heart, before which this evil diſpoſition will fly as a miſt before the morning ſun. You greatly affect me by what you ſay in regard to the expected hour of danger; but fear not. No creature on earth can be more unworthy than I am; and the God of mercy protected me, and gave me ſtrength, and courage, and calmneſs; and I doubt not but he will ſhew the ſame mercy to you; nay I have a ſtrong confidence he will in your hour of extremity give you a clearer ſenſe of his pardoning love, than you have yet experienced. Fear not, only believe, "All things "are poſſible to him that believeth."

It has pleaſed God within theſe few days to give me a ſevere trial, and eternal glory be to his name. I have ſtood it crying only, *Lord, thy will be done.* My little boy was taken on *Saturday* evening with ſtrong convulſions, and between that time and *Sunday* evening had I believe full forty fits. He is now much better. God is ever merciful: he brings to the borders of the grave, and raiſes up again. Oh how good it is to ſuffer? How glorious to have grace triumph over nature? How ſweet to lay low at the foot of the croſs, and bleſs God for every thing which more conforms us to the ſuffering Jeſus? Be watchful, and earneſt. *Adieu.*

My dear Friend,

WHere the conſideration of the prophecies is a means of ſtirring any one up to greater diligence, of making them ſit looſer to the things of this world, and ſeek more earneſtly after the things of God, they cannot conſider them too attentively. Every ſoul ſhould carefully obſerve that way, in which God particularly leads it, and punctually follow e-

very

very means which it finds by experience brings it nearer to God. Some are awakened and brought low by meditating on the ſevere judgments of God; others are melted down by reflecting on his mercies. Some are employed uſefully to themſelves, and it may be to others, by accurately conſidering the ſeveral amazing diſpenſations of God in the whole ſcheme of our redemption. Others by a more ſimple and general view of God, as infinite wiſdom and infinite love, reſt calmly on his will, and though in a lower and leſs ſhining way purſue the ſame end, *viz.* ſalvation by the blood of the lamb from the power as well as from the guilt of ſin, and union with the pure foundation of all happineſs. All theſe ways are good in themſelves, and are made ſo to every ſoul, which in *them* follows the leadings of the Spirit of God. But I may make that, which is good in itſelf, evil to me, by uſing it *only becauſe* another thinks it right, and not becauſe I find it the means which moſt unites my ſoul to Chriſt: and therefore we ought never to blame any one for not being affected by that which affects us.

'Tis very certain that the judgments of God are now abroad in the earth, and that ſome of the ſigns of the laſt times plainly appear; this (whether the calculation in the letter be right or wrong) is obvious to every one, and calls aloud for ſerioufneſs and watchfulneſs. Happy are thoſe who ſhall ſtand unmoved in the time of temptation. Happy are thoſe who when all nature is agoniſing around them can fly to the only rock of refuge, and there find ſhelter from the ſtorm, and ſhadow from the heat. But above all happy are thoſe, who ſhall have the glory of ſuffering for their Redeemer, of ſealing their teſtimony with their blood, or in the midſt of the fire ſhouting for joy, and bleſſing God for a martyr's crown. Theſe, theſe are glorious proſpects, and weak as we are, ſhould God honour us with a trial like this, he would alſo give us ſtrength to be more than conquerors. In the mean time let us not

be weary or faint in our minds, but manfully fight till we obtain complete victory over our evil hearts; and then ſhall we ſtand with humble confidence even before our judge, and though all nature was diſſolved, we ſhould remain unſhaken, and be wholly ſwallowed up in joy full of glory. Amen, Lord Jeſus.

My dear Friend,

I Thank you for your laſt letter, and I bleſs God, that you was not offended at mine. This bearing of plain-dealing is a comfortable proof to me of your ſincerity. If temptations increaſe, God will give a proportionable increaſe of ſtrength. There wants nothing but faithfulneſs on your part to the grace already given. I know not the particulars of your ſufferings, but I know it is good to ſuffer. It is a diſcipline all muſt go through, who make any tolerable advance in the ſchool of Chriſt. I could wiſh you to ſeek more after religion, than comfort. Conſtant and heart-felt reſignation is a bulwark againſt every trial, and a foundation for ſolid peace, and joy tranſcendently pure. The whole ſtate of a ſoul made perfect in love ſtands in that one petition, *Thy will be done*; and if we could but preſerve that temper which theſe words deſcribe, I know not what could hurt us. Suppoſe now when I firſt wake in a morning I ſhould lift up my heart, "Lord I bleſs thee for this new day "which thou haſt given me. In this day I ſhall "have freſh manifeſtations of thy will concerning "me, either in comforts or in ſufferings. Lord I "am thy creature, deal with me as it ſhall pleaſe "thee: only leave me not to myſelf, but let thy "grace be ſufficient for me, and thy ſtrength be

"made

" made perfect in my weakneſs." When ſettled in this frame of mind, ſuppoſe my trials to begin. I am tempted by the perverſneſs and evil tempers of my own family to impatience, to anger; but I immediately recollect myſelf, " Lord it is thy will I " ſhould bear this; pardon their perverſneſs, and " give me to be thankful for every opportunity of " ſelf-denial and forbearance." Well! now another, and more difficult trial appears. I am to behave to people, whom I know to be my bitter enemies, whom I know to be continually watching occaſions of evil againſt me, as if they were my dear friends. Here every faculty of the ſoul is alarmed, and nature ſhrinks back affrighted. But what does grace ſay? " Lord I thank thee for this glorious " trial! What a bleſſing is it I ſhould be permitted " to drink of the ſame cup my Saviour drank of! " Oh bleſs theſe mine enemies; fill their hearts " with thy love; let thy will be perfected both " in them and me." This temptation is conquered, but another and a more trying one immediately ſucceeds. I am treated unkindly by people I love, and who are really my friends. Here my heart is wounded, it ſinks, it is ready to faint; but recovering itſelf it reſts upon God, and ſays, " Lord, " even in this, thy will be done, and let the " ſufferings of Chriſt be perfected in me, that I " may be alſo a partaker of his glory." In this manner one might inſtance in all kinds of affliction, and find comfort and ſtrength in each.

I know not how to think ſo meanly of you, as to imagine your heart in danger of being drawn away by the world. But I know I am always apt to ſet you in too high a light, and it may be ſo in this caſe: this one thing however I am ſure of, that we are fighting for *eternity*, and this againſt innumerable enemies, dangerous ones without, but far more dangerous ones within. If the Lord him-

ſelf was not on our ſide, how could we maintain our ground one moment. To his almighty protection I commend you and yours, and am

Your ever-affectionate, &c.

To the Rev. Mr. ****

Dear Sir,

I AM much obliged to you for your kind concern on my account. My illneſs I believe is rather troubleſome than dangerous, a diſorder in my ſtomach, which has been attended with a ſlight fever. I was ill, when you and Mr. *** were to ſee me, though I did not complain, and I looked upon it as a particular bleſſing: for had my ſpirits been in their full flow, an event ſo much wiſhed, would have too much elated me; but my diſorder ſerved to keep the balance of my mind even. I ſee the goodneſs of God to me in every thing, and therefore ſickneſs or health, life or death are equally welcome to me, as coming from the ſame gracious hand. Nature its true ſhrinks at ſuffering, but grace triumphs in reſignation, and is thankful for the diſpenſation of the preſent moment, without wiſhing or willing in regard to the future. But I hope to learn ſome leſſons of this kind from you next *Sunday*. Till then farewell, and may the fulneſs of every goſpel-bleſſing reſt upon your ſoul.

Yours, &c.

* *

Dear

Dear, Sir,

THE judgments of God upon *Liſbon* are dreadful indeed. I know not what heart can be hard enough to hear of them without concern. What but the amazing mercy of a long-ſuffering God can prevent *London* from feeling the ſame dreadful blow! And if God ſhould ariſe to ſhake terribly our land, what great reaſon will thoſe perſons have to be thankful, whom God has drawn from all worldly ſchemes of happineſs, and fixed their hearts on a baſis, which can never be ſhaken, though the earth be moved, and the mountains caſt into the midſt of the ſea? I have been much comforted in reſpect of the miſeries of others by this ſcripture—*When the judgments of God are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants thereof will learn righteouſneſs.* If ſuch a bleſſed end is produced by theſe ſevere acts of juſtice, have we not reaſon even in the midſt of terror to admire and adore? The whole univerſe appears to me to be in the hand of God, as a grain of duſt in the balance; and I, a creature more inſignificant, more worthleſs, and ſinful than can be conceived, am among the reſt in this almighty hand, and *all is ſafe.* My heart is by nature painfully tender, and yet in the midſt of feeling, either for myſelf or others, there is a ſecret ſatisfaction in my inmoſt ſoul, that God is glorified in every act of his providence, whether of judgment or mercy; and I hardly know how to form any other prayer than *Thy will be done.*

I fear I ſhall not ſee you on *Thurſday*; ——— but wherever you are, may the God of all conſolation be your light and your ſhield, and bring you ſafe to that city, which has eternal foundations.

I am your ever-obliged friend and ſervant, &c.

BY what you ſaid to Mr. *** when he had the pleaſure of hearing you, I imagine you think my illneſs is owing to a cauſe of which I am by no means certain; however the bare probability of ſuch a charge would not be without my immediately reflecting on the dangers and temptations that would attend it: a ſoul, that is really deſirous of attaining the *pure* love of God, is exceedingly jealous of any thing that has a poſſibility of drawing it from its centre of happineſs, and looks upon any event which has this poſſible tendency (let the world term it bleſſing or misfortune) with a tender anxious fear, which none can underſtand but thoſe who have felt it. This was my caſe, and my imagination would ſometimes paint a thouſand inſtances which *might* draw my ſoul down to earth; and this fear (though it never made me wiſh any thing but what was the will of God) would bring the tears to my eyes, and cauſe an uneaſineſs, which doubtleſs proceeded from want of faith. But that God whoſe mercies are renewed every morning, ſoon delivered me from thoſe fears, and calm peace, perfect reſignation and watchfulneſs ſucceeded; and for this fortnight paſt, though I have been in continual uncertainty, whether I ſhould continue in the condition I am thought to be in or not, my mind by the all-ſufficient grace of God has been ſo equally kept, that I have not had the leaſt wiſh or choice of my own, but have been equally pleaſed with whatever ſeemed to be the leadings of providence concerning me. And you cannot think, what a work of annihilation this uncertainty has been the means of carrying on in my ſoul, which I ſee plainly in the nature of things could not ſo well have been effected by any other. I never can be enough thankful for the

the unſpeakable mercies of God to ſo unworthy a creature. My will has been brought into a deadneſs, which I, even a *few months* ago, ſhould have thought almoſt impoſſible; and I ſee, and have ſome foretaſts of that ſtate which is called the pure and diſintereſted love of God, in a manner I cannot expreſs.

I ſhould be very glad to ſee you when your affairs will permit, for I have not had one help from without ſince I ſaw you laſt; nor have I had *many* of thoſe joys and comforts from within which have ſometimes been indulged me; and indeed my animal frame would have been too weak to have borne them, unleſs God had in a particular manner ſupported it: for every faculty of my ſoul has been weighed down by continual ſickneſs. I have not only been incapable of any outward application, but alſo of intenſe thinking or fervent prayer: but in the midſt of this *my* weakneſs, the ſtrength of God has more abundantly been made manifeſt, that I might be abaſed even to the duſt, and his free grace exalted; ſo that I well underſtand what St. *Paul* meant, when he ſaid; *Therefore will I glory in infirmities, in weakneſſes, in diſtreſſes, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me.*—But I muſt finiſh this already too long letter. Farewel! May the dew of heaven from above continually refreſh you!

* *

January 19, 1756.

Dear Sir,

I Am much obliged to you for your letter, from which I have learnt a very uſeful leſſon, *viz.* never

never to fancy that the particular circumſtances of others would be more advantageous to me than my own. You are ready almoſt to envy *me* my *many* hours of retirement; when at the ſame time, *I* am continually complaining that I have ſo *few*, and often crying out, when *ſhall* I have a *whole day* to myſelf? And then I frequently think, were I a man and in the miniſtry, my time would then be *all* ſpent for God; but *now*, what an inundation of trifling flows in upon me, which 'tis impoſſible for me to avoid, without altogether going out of the world.

I enter upon the ſubject, on which you bid me write with fear and trembling. My abilities are really far from being equal to it: for although I know many chriſtians, who would immediately cry out, that it needed not one moment's conſideration, I dare not do ſo; for I now do really *feel* the weight of it upon my ſoul. 'Tis a moſt alarming truth, that a miniſter may ſpeak with the tongue of men and of angels, and that the power of God may ſo accompany his words as to make them the means of converting thouſands; and yet for want of duly ſearching into his own heart, he may ſuffer it to be overgrown with poiſonous weeds, with tempers and inclinations, which if unſubdued, will abſolutely ſhut *him out* from that kingdom of glory, to which he is leading others. How eaſy for a man who is continually ſetting forth the glorious truths of the goſpel, and inforcing holineſs of heart and life, to imagine (for want of conſtant ſelf-examination) that *he himſelf is* what he preaches? This is a moſt dangerous ſnare; and therefore how abſolutely neceſſary is that retirement which affords opportunity for a diligent ſearch into the receſſes of the heart, and gives the ſoul leiſure to wait in awful ſilence before God, where, free from every object of ſenſe, and from the workings of imagination, it may with all its faculties proſtrate before the eternal Trinity and feel itſelf to be nothing, and God to be

be *all in all?* But then it may be aſked, ſhall not a man who with ſingleneſs of heart, ſpends and is ſpent for the ſervice of God, be ſo kept by divine grace that his ſoul ſhall ſuffer no loſs by the want of retirement? Doubtleſs. Where *ſincerity* and *ſingleneſs* of heart are preſerved, that ſoul ſhall be defended as with a ſhield. But this I take to be the grand temptation of every miniſter of the goſpel: he ſets out perhaps (though this is not always the caſe) with a ſingle view to the glory of God and the ſalvation of ſouls. The power of God accompanies his words, the hearts of the people fall under him. His reputation daily increaſes, till at laſt he becomes popular; he ſees himſelf ſurrounded by a croud of people, who for the moſt part hear him as an angel of God, their thirſty ſouls gaſping after the truths he utters. An innocent and an *holy* joy fills his heart; "Here are "ſouls that may be won to Chriſt, and that *by me!* "O Lord, what amazing love, that *I* who am the "leaſt of all thy ſervants ſhould be thus bleſt!"— So far all is well, all is happy: but the ſubtil enemy of mankind ſo ſtrongly impreſſes this, *by me*, that a ſelf-complacency, ſeparate from the glory of God, ariſes in his heart, and this, if not immediately quelled, leads him to the brink of a precipice. God ſtill, for the ſake of others, continues his uſefulneſs; but every converſion which he is the means of making is freſh food for his ſelf-love, and by degrees he becomes ſo dead to the love of God, that he preaches even the pureſt doctrines of the goſpel, with the ſame ſpirit, with which a lawyer pleads at the bar. But on the contrary, that *bleſſed ſervant* of Chriſt who ſtedfaſtly purſues the narrow path, who conquers every riſing of ſelf-love in its firſt appearance, and conſtantly refers all the good he does or ſpeaks to the author and giver of all good, *he* ſhall be kept in all his ways, and bleſt in all his works. And though his ſoul may pant for retirement, as thinking he ſhould there enjoy nearer

nearer communion with God, and make higher advances in the divine life, this *may not* perhaps be immediately permitted him: but in order that his future crown may be the brighter, *God may make* his preſent uſefulneſs a *ſure ſign* to *him*, that he ought to continue his conſtant labours for others, though it ſhould be with much temptation, fear, and trembling. However this is very certain, that God to a ſervant *thus ſincere*, will point out a plain path, either by *inward leadings* which cannot be miſtaken, or *outward providences*.—Adieu! Pardon the weakneſs of this; let me ſee you the firſt time you have to ſpare, and believe me

Your ever obliged and affectionate Servant,

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Dear Sir,

WHatever the Spirit of God makes uſeful to my heart, either from ſcripture or from ſpiritual authors, I thankfully receive, and give him the glory: but I well know there is but one great touch ſtone, by which all doctrines are to be tried; and therefore I hope your kind fears for me, leſt I ſhould not enough eſteem the written word of God, are needleſs: I am ſo far from ſetting any human writer on a footing with this, that I ſcarcely *read* them at all, *i. e.* in compariſon of my Bible. I *look* over ſome few, but this is very different from the manner of reading you recommend, and which I ſtrive by the grace of God to practiſe; nay it would be the greateſt ſlavery to me you can conceive, if I were obliged to read many religious books: however I return you the ſincereſt thanks for your

your care, and beg you will *in all* things watch over me with a "godly jealouſy."—But my dear friend, could you imagine that I enquired after the *ſtate* of your *mind* according to the *common acceptation* of the word? I only deſired to know what ſpiritual bleſſings you had both from without and within, that I might ſhare them with you; and this I was emboldened to do by the ſweet account you had given in your former letter, of the bleſſings you enjoyed at *Briſtol*. The Lord refreſh your ſoul continually with the rich ſtreams of his redeeming love, and may his everlaſting arms be beneath you! I know your preſent ſtate, of hanging as it were in ſuſpence between the viſible and inviſible world, is a diſpenſation big with divine love; and was I to pray for you that prayer which my ſoul moſt loves, it would *be*, "that you *ſhould* lie in the hand of God "as an inſtrument, without choice, 'till the will "of God was perfected in you." This would be the prayer of pure love and enlightened faith; but if I deſcended to the tenderneſs of friendſhip, I ſhould aſk your ſpeedy recovery. If it ſhould be given me to ſee you again in this world of vanity and woe, I ſhall be thankful, and perhaps it may be ſo: but I know not—*ſomething* ſeems to whiſper me that the thread both of your life and mine is nearly ſpun. For my part, I have within theſe few days had a ſweet call to eternity, by a ſudden and violent diſorder in my ſtomach and bowels (called according to the faſhionable phraſe a *nervous* cholick) which ſeems to have ſet me a good way forwards on my journey: happy pain! kind meſſenger! Oh my friend, I have nothing but mercies to tell you of. So ſupported! Such wondrous grace! Such boundleſs love! *I* all ſin and miſery. The *Saviour* all tenderneſs and mercy. The *probable* approach of death delightful. No ſting remaining. No clog upon my chariot-wheels. Mercies too from without which I had never before experienced in a time of ſickneſs. The Rev. Mr. *** praying

ing and ſinging by my bed, with ſuch power of faith and love, ſuch unction from above! Does this hurry the ſpirits? Does this endanger? How far from it? I proteſt not only my ſoul rejoiced, but even my body grew better as he prayed. Do not fail to thank God on my behalf, and pray for me that I may not be ungrateful to ſuch amazing mercy. May the Lord Jeſus preſerve you, ſweeten every pain, and make you rejoice continually with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

Your ever-affectionate and obliged Friend,

June 7, 1756.

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June 15, 1756.

Dear Sir,

YOUR very kind letter has pain'd me extremely, but I hope it has been made a means of humbling my ſoul before God. How little do I deſerve that you ſhould write to me in this manner? Alas you do not know me; I am leſs than the leaſt of all the mercies of God; do not, I beſeech you, think ſo highly of me; it really makes me aſhamed of myſelf. Oh that I could be lower than the duſt! Oh that I could ſhrink into nothing at the preſence of my God! The way too in which you ſpeak of yourſelf, puts me in a ſtrange dilemma. I dare not pay religious compliments, and yet how ſhall I write to you as if I believed you? How much greater has your croſs of ſickneſs been than mine? So long, ſo lingering, ſuch inconveniencies as it lays you under; but yet this is certainly *no* excuſe for a ſoul, *taught of God, as your's is*, to wiſh its

its removal. Do you *indeed wish* for any thing but ſanctification? Surely, my dear friend, you wrong yourſelf, it cannot be. Oh remember the glorious path you have often pointed out to me, of perfect reſignation; I have conſidered you as a pattern to me, *particularly* in *this*. I muſt not think that *you* have any "reluctance to bear the croſs;" it would wound my heart too much. Do I not know, that you love God above all things? Do not I know the ſincere deſires of your ſoul after holineſs? And is there any way in the ſpiritual life, which ſo immediately leads to holineſs, as *willing ſuffering*? Happy are thoſe to whom God gives the grace of *doing* much for him, for his cauſe, for his people; but *ten times* more bleſſed are they who *ſuffer* with Chriſt. Is there a joy abſolutely pure? It is that of ſuffering. Oh did we but know the health, the peace, the life that is at the bottom of every bitter cup; with what alacrity ſhould we drink it? With what thankfulneſs, nay, with tears of joy, ſhould we cry, Lord, what unbounded mercy, what aſtoniſhing grace is this, to a worm like me; that *I* ſhould be led in this *moſt excellent* way; that *I* ſhould be made to tread in thoſe footſteps which are *moſt eminently* thine? Deareſt Saviour, ſweet is thy croſs, ſweet is thy thorny crown; thy ſtripes, thy wounds, thy pain, *more* delightful than beds of roſes. Let other ſouls glory in mount *Tabor*; *my* joy ſhall be to ſtay with *Thee* on mount *Calvary*, that I may be made conformable to thy death. Such would be the language of a ſoul truly ſenſible of the great benefit of ſuffering, and embracing, with ſweet complacency, the croſs, which thus united it with its Redeemer. May this be the language of your ſoul and mine; then ſhall we be found unſhaken in the fiery trial, and come out as gold purified ſeven times. But after all, what ſuffering have I had in this illneſs? It can ſcarce be called ſuffering, when God ſenſibly ſupports. The ſuffering is when *he* leaves the ſoul

(as it were alone) in pain or in affliction, to ſtruggle with the powers of darkneſs, which at ſuch a time eagerly beſet it. *This I have ſometimes known, and this is ſuffering indeed.*—I have the ſame confidence in God for my dear Mr. *** that you have: was I to be removed I doubt not but it would be made a means of good to his ſoul; but it ſeems at preſent to be the will of God that I ſhould continue ſome time longer. My inward weakneſs is not ſo great, and my pain, though pretty conſtant, is ſo ſlight that 'tis ſcarce worth the mentioning. I thank God that your health is returning, and truſt we ſhall meet again on this ſide the river; but in the meantime pray earneſtly for *me*. I fear eaſe more than pain. Farewel! May you and I conſtantly join in this prayer, "Thy will be done in "us, and by us, in time and in eternity!"

Your ever-obliged and affectionate Friend,

* *

July 1, 1756.

My dear friend,

I Received your letter with much thankfulneſs, for I began to be very uneaſy at not hearing from you in ſo long a time; and you have for theſe two days lain with ſuch a weight on my ſpirit, that I knew not how to account for it. I well know the manner in which the praiſe you beſtowed was meant; but you know not how I dread ſelf-complacency; and therefore though I often find that praiſe humbles me, yet it gives me a pain I know not how to expreſs. I have indeed often heard you

ſpeak

ſpeak thoſe words you mention, but they never affected me till now: and did you ſpeak them in "the bitterneſs of your ſoul?"—Call me no more your friend! I am not worthy the name. How often have I heard them with unconcern, looking on them only as words of courſe, a kind of commonplace humility. Will you forgive me? I promiſe you for the future I will pay more attention to every thing you ſay; I will not by the grace of God be ſo indolent and ſo faithleſs in the things which concern you as I have been. I know I am apt to think too highly of thoſe I love, and I hate to be diſturbed in the thought. You cannot imagine how ingenious I am in caſting theſe burdens from me: a latent fear of diſpleaſing, and a falſe humility, furniſh me with arguments. "Why ſhould "*I* pretend to ſpeak ſo and ſo, to people ſo much "more advanced in grace than myſelf?" Not conſidering that God can work by the weakeſt and moſt unworthy. But cannot I pray? Oh my friend, if ever I *have* been wanting in ardent prayers for you, ſurely I hope never to be ſo again; that communion of ſpirit which I have with you in the life of Chriſt, ſhall I truſt add wings to my prayers on your behalf, and gain new degrees of ſtrength to my own ſoul.

Your laſt letter is a comfortable earneſt to me, that I ſhall at leaſt have one companion in the way which God has ſent me to walk in, *the way of the croſs, the inward crucifixion*, as you ſo juſtly call it;) thanks be to God for this refreſhment to my ſpirit!) Many ſpeak of this, and becauſe St. *Paul* mentions the being crucified, *&c.* with Chriſt, they preach about and about it; but I ſee plainly that *you* not only *ſpeak* but *feel*.—And *do* you know *ſo much* of the *bitterneſs* of the creature? The Lord be praiſed! May you daily know it more and more! I am ſure this experience will only make the hidden manna the ſweeter: and I am equally ſure that thoſe bitter draughts are abſolutely ne-

ceſſary to every ſoul that would *wholly* give itſelf up to God. 'Tis eaſy to talk of the will being perfectly reſigned, ſwallowed up in the will of God, *&c.* and while this only floats as a notion in the brain, no great ſufferings will attend it. But when the ſoul really feels what this implies, that it is a being cut off from the creature, then it knows indeed what it is to ſuffer, then it fights as it were in the midſt of the fire. Every thought muſt be brought into obedience to Chriſt; and God effects this in the ſoul as it is able to bear it: firſt one trial comes, then another; one ſtrikes at love in the creature, another at ſelf-love, a third at ſpiritual pride; and the fight continues till Chriſt has brought down all his enemies, and led captivity captive. And to attain this ſtate of glorious liberty, who would not rejoice to ſuffer? What a coward muſt he be who would fly from a field of battle, where to die is to conquer? Oh what bleſſed encouragements has a chriſtian to fight manfully! Let us not be weary or faint in our minds; we have not yet reſiſted unto blood ſtriving againſt ſin; but let us not fail to do it. Have we not a captain who treads all the powers of death and hell under his feet? Is he not Jehovah, mighty to ſave? And has he not promiſed that he will ſave even to the *uttermoſt*? The way we have to travel is indeed long, and there are lions in it; but what of that! Jeſus the deliverer is with us, and nothing ſhall hurt us.

Through Jeſus we can all things do,

all things ſuffer, all things conquer, and what would we more? Farewel, may the peace of God be with you, and make your ſoul to reſt on him.

Your ever obliged and affectionate

Friend and Servant,

* *

To

To Miſs ****.

Wedneſday Night, February 13, 1754.

A Cold has been the means of preventing me from ſpending the evening in the trifling manner which you, my dear friend, have been forced to do; though I cannot but hope that your mind, in the midſt of all this noiſe and nonſenſe, has been enabled to keep itſelf in a ſtate of recollection, and that you are ſtill more fully convinced that *all*, the *world* calls pleaſure and gaiety, is mere vanity and vexation of ſpirit.—I thank you for your letter, it has given me great ſatisfaction, and freſh cauſe to praiſe God on your account; I rejoice in your joy, and may our gracious and kind Redeemer increaſe and eſtabliſh your joy and peace in believing! You have indeed the utmoſt reaſon to be thankful that ſuch a work of mercy has been begun in your ſoul, and fear not but that bleſſed Spirit who has convinced you of ſin, and led you to look to the only means of deliverance, will perfect the work he has begun! What a happy ſign, that you can already lay hold *on* and *apply* the promiſes to yourſelf? O continue inſtant in prayer for ſtill greater degrees of faith; and ſhun as you would the moſt deadly poiſon, every *action*, *word*, and *thought*, which is contrary to the Spirit of God! And always reflect with the moſt thankful heart on the love of Chriſt to your ſoul: think that our merciful Saviour is more ready to hear than we to pray; think with what joy the father received the returning prodigal, and be aſſured that *you* and *I*, and every returning *ſinner*, will be received with the

ſame joy, cloathed with the ſame glorious robes, and ſhall be admitted to ſit down at the ſame *feaſt*, even the marriage-ſupper of the Lamb!

I am with the utmoſt tenderneſs,

Your ever-affectionate and faithful Friend,

* *

Wedneſday Night, March 20, 1754.

My dear Friend,

I Am rejoiced and bleſs God that your mind was in ſo happy a ſtate, while your body was in the midſt of folly and confuſion: you obſerve very juſtly, that thoſe diverſions are *abſolutely* unfit for *one* who is ſeeking *ſalvation*. Nothing indeed can be more contrary to the *ſpirit* of the *goſpel*, than what the *world* calls *polite* amuſements. What can be more abſurd than for one who deſires to be a *chriſtian*, who deſires the *mind* which was in *Chriſt*, who deſires that *juſtification* by *faith*, which alone can produce in the *heart true* humility and meekneſs, deadneſs to the world, conſtant reſignation to God, and fervent deſire to do his will: what abſurdity it is for ſuch a perſon (*in all the* extravagance and and glare of dreſs) to be *ſwimming* or *ſkipping* about a room, and wiſhing to draw the attention and admiration of the moſt vile and profligate part of the human ſpecies? What abſurdity for ſuch a perſon as this to ſit in that houſe, which is as much devoted to the devil as the church is to God, for three hours together, to hear obſcenities at which a virtuous heathen would have bluſhed?—If you aſk twenty

of

of the people who do theſe things whether they are chriſtians, nineteen of them will anſwer, they are chriſtians *to be ſure!* what do you think of them? Or if they are not now quite ſo good as they ought to be, they hope to be better by and by! But can a ſoul which *truly* ſeeks after ſalvation do theſe things? No certainly. And when the Spirit of God has wrought in a ſoul this hatred of the vanities it uſed to delight in, it has reaſon to rejoice *indeed.* What greater mark of the love of God to us, than his having thus drawn us to delight above all things in himſelf? If we love a friend, we deſire and ſtrive that this friend may return our love, and joy and delight in us: and amazing condeſcendſion! will the Creator of all things viſible and inviſible, the *God* who called *angels* and *archangels* into *being*, thus deal with us *poor ſinful* worms? What heart can withſtand ſuch love? What heart but muſt at this thought ſink into the duſt, and loſe itſelf in wonder, joy, and adoration? I have time for no more. *Adieu.*

* *

BLESSED *are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted! Bleſſed are they who hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled.* Theſe are the words of the God of truth; and can you then, my dear friend, be diſcouraged becauſe you are now mourning after this God, who only hides himſelf from you, that you may *more earneſtly* ſeek him? — Heavineſs may endure for a night, but *joy* cometh in the *morning.* There certainly is no heavineſs like this heavineſs: when a ſoul has been ſenſible (though in the *leaſt* degree) of the influences of the ſun of righteouſneſs, and finds

finds his all-cheering beams withdrawn, how *painful*, how *heavy* is the darkneſs! This is indeed *darkneſs* that may be *felt*: but when the joy returns, what peace! what happineſs! Look, my dear, on the material ſun, obſerve how all the creation around you is *brightened* and *gladdened* when he ſhines; and be aſſured, that on your earneſt ſeeking after Chriſt, he will in like manner ſhine again on *your* ſoul, and make it *glad* with the *light* of his countenance.

Your ever-affectionate

Wedneſday Night,
April 1754.

* *

July 19, 1754.

I Am very glad, my dear, that your mind is in ſo happy a ſtate, and that you ſeem to have ſo true a ſenſe of the *littleneſs* of *all* the *world* calls *great* and deſirable. The love of *God* and the love of the *world* are directly oppoſite each other; and therefore St. *John* ſays, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*: this is a ſure rule to try ourſelves by. We may talk well, and act well in ſome *outward* things, nay perhaps be zealous for the genuine doctrines of the goſpel, yet all this while, if the love of the world remains in our hearts, we may be very certain we are no chriſtians.—I fear you have not much opportunity of being alone, but ſee from your letter you make good uſe of that you have; however God is both able and willing to preſerve (either alone or in company) the ſoul which conſtantly looks towards him. I was afraid your being at *** might hurt you, but thank God I find I had no cauſe for fear: you ſeem I think rather to

advance

advance than go back. Give God the glory! For whatever of good is in you is all from his free and boundleſs mercy; and ceaſe not conſtantly to fight, in the ſtrength of your Redeemer, againſt every ſin, and fear not but he will ſet you free, take off the heavy burden you complain of, and cloath you with *his perfect righteouſneſs. Adieu.*

YOU tell me, my dear, that your preſent dark ſtate of mind is owing to your thoughts dwelling ſo much on worldly objects: but carry your ſincerity yet a little further, and tell me if it is not ſome *one particular object* on which your thoughts are fixed, and which rivals your Creator in your heart? I much fear this is the caſe: and if ſo, you will find it very difficult to conquer. But let not any difficulty diſcourage you from ſtriving to "pluck out "this right eye, and caſt it from you;" the grace of God is ſufficient for you, his ſtrength is made perfect in your weakneſs; and you may depend upon it, that as ſoon as ever you have given up your idol, the ſun of righteouſneſs will again ariſe in your ſoul with healing in his wings; the God of mercy will again be known by you, as your reconciled Father in Chriſt; and the bleſſed Spirit will lead and guide, and fill you with that peace which paſſes all underſtanding; and you will walk in all the ordinances of the Lord rejoicing.

I am your ever affectionate and faithful Friend,

Tueſday Morning,
Auguſt 12, 1754.

* * *

My

My dear Friend,

YOUR laſt letter gave me great pleaſure: I ſincerely rejoice in the happineſs of your ſoul, as in that of my own, and I hope God will ſtrengthen you more and more by his grace, ſo that you may forſake every thing for him. Above all ſacrifice your own will: let this conſtantly be the language of your heart, "Lord not my will, but thine be "done." Strive not only to be content, but to rejoice in every thing that mortifies your corrupt nature: hourly reflect that you are a fallen creature, ſent into this world for no other end than to be reſtored to that nature which our firſt father loſt, and ſo be made fit for the kingdom of heaven. Remember that Chriſt died for you that you might live wholly to him; and the more you do this, the more you will certainly have of that peace which paſſeth all underſtanding.

I am your ever affectionate Friend,

Sept. 16, 1755. * *

My dear Friend,

I Have read Mr. *B.*'s letter, and think it exceedingly pretty; the ſtile is eaſy and flowing, the language ſoft and affecting, the ſentiments he expreſſes, in regard to his friend and yourſelf, very beautiful:

beautiful: but what is all this to the purpoſe? Or how can this convince you that you ought to give up thoſe means of grace which you have found ſo extremely beneficial to your ſoul, in order to make a proper wife for Mr. *C.*? 'Tis true there are ſeveral aſſertions in Mr. *B*'s letter, deſigned to ſhew the reaſonableneſs of your making the promiſe; but aſſerting and proving are two things. Whatever has the appearance of argument in this letter may, I imagine, be reduced to theſe heads: *1ſt*, That it is abſolutely wrong for any member of the church of *England* to attend the meetings of ſeparatiſts. *2dly*, That in the church of *England*, a ſoul may find every thing neceſſary for its attaining the higheſt degrees of faith and holineſs. *3dly*, That Mr. *W.* is a ſeparatiſt; and *4thly*, That your having any acquaintance with him will hurt Mr. *C.* both in his temporal intereſt, and in his character as a miniſter.—The opinion I had conceived of Mr. *B.* was very high, I imagined him actuated by that ſpirit of *univerſal love*, which is the firſt and ruling principle of every ſoul that is born of God; and I make no doubt but this is his *real* character: however (in this affair) he may *ſeem* to incline to a *partial ſelfiſh* orthodoxy. Could the church of *England* be proved to be the *only church* of *Chriſt*, there might be ſome reaſon for the cry of ſchiſm which we hear ſo much of: but what is ſhe more than one of the moſt unexceptionable of thoſe many diviſions into which the univerſal church is broken? And therefore a ſeparation from her, though cauſeleſs, or from miſtaken motives, cannot properly be called making a ſchiſm in the *church* of *Chriſt*. For my part (but I ſpeak it with ſubmiſſion to Mr. *B*'s judgment) I apprehend, that the only *real* and dangerous ſchiſm is the want of that ſpirit of love, which makes us rejoice in whatever is good and excellent in people of all denominations, and ready to receive good even of thoſe who moſt differ from *us* in ceremonies and

opinion,

opinion. And why a perſon of this ſpirit (ſuppoſe one in communion with the church of *England*) may not be allowed ſometimes to hear a miniſter among the *Preſbyterians*, or any other ſect, if they find this miniſter's preaching bleſt to their ſouls, I cannot imagine. What St. *Paul* ſays in regard to giving offence to weak brethren, is often quoted to prove what it has nothing to do with; for St. *Paul* ſurely does not mean that he neglected thoſe things which were profitable to *his ſoul*, for fear of giving offence to the weak, but that he refrained from outward things (ſuch as making difference in meats, *&c.*) which he, as ſtrong in faith, knew to be wholly indifferent, leſt his example ſhould tempt thoſe who were weak to do things by which their conſciences might be wounded.—As to Mr. *B*'s ſecond argument, *in one ſenſe* of it, I heartily agree with him: the homilies, the articles, and liturgy of the church of *England*, doubtleſs do contain all the doctrines neceſſary to faith and holineſs. But alas, how little are theſe doctrines regarded either in preaching or practiſe, by the generality of her miniſters! Let any one who has the leaſt degree of ſerioufneſs, look round the churches of *London*, will he not ſee the people for the moſt part repeating an excellent ſett of prayers, juſt as a parrot repeats a ſong; and the miniſter giving forth doctrines from the pulpit, as directly contrary to thoſe prayers as darkneſs is to light. This is ſo plain a matter of fact that it cannot be contradicted; and it is *as* notorious, that whenever any miniſter in the church of *England* begins to preach her *real* doctrines, and live up to her precepts, he is immediately called a *Methodiſt*. This name is given to him as a reproach, but as it comes upon him for ſpeaking the truth, it is in fact a glory. Ever ſince Chriſt was upon the earth, *real* chriſtians have had a nick-name: but ſurely no one who is ſincerely bent to follow him can regard this: I doubt not but Mr. *B.* himſelf is called a *Methodiſt*.

But

But I now come to Mr. *B*'s third argument, that moſt dreadful charge laid againſt Mr. *W*. that *he is a ſeparatiſt*. This charge has been repeated over and over again, but has never yet been clearly proved. If four walls, with a ſteeple and bells, was the church of *England*, Mr. *W*. might with ſome ſhadow of reaſon be ſaid to have ſeparated from it, becauſe he ſeldom preaches in theſe places: but *this* is no fault of his, for he will gladly preach in any of them, when their reſpective miniſters will let him: and he was never denied preaching in what is called a church, till he ſtrongly inſiſted on *that doctrine* for which the martyrs of the reformation laid down their lives, and which is the very fundamental doctrine of the church of *England*, *juſtification by faith*. Any one who would read Mr. *W*'s *Appeals* with a ſincere and impartial ſpirit, would I believe be fully convinced that this charge againſt him could not ſtand.—As to the hurt your being acquainted with Mr. *W*. might do to Mr. *C*, in his temporal intereſt, it depends intirely upon himſelf. If he preaches to his people *ſmooth* things and propheſies *deceits*, if he joins with them in their *innocent amuſements*, which *lull* ſouls aſleep, and keeps them in an utter ignorance of their *fall* and their *redemption* 'till they awake in a miſerable eternity: go *you* where you will, not a dog will move its tongue againſt him, nor will the generoſity of his pariſhioners be in the leaſt abated towards him; and all they ſay of him will *only* be *poor man!* what pity that ſuch a good-natured good ſort of a man ſhould have ſuch a ſad wife. But do I think Mr. *C*. will act in this manner? *No*, certainly I *do not*. I verily believe, from what you yourſelf have ſaid of him, that he intends to prove himſelf a true miniſter of Chriſt, that he will *boldly* and *earneſtly* call ſinners to repentance, and that his life and converſation will be wholly agreeable to his preaching: and if this is the caſe, though you were never to ſee Mr. *W*. again, Mr. *C*. would

be called a *Methodiſt*, the greateſt part of his pariſhioners would cry out againſt him, and in all probability their generoſity towards him would greatly decreaſe. So that conſider the affair in what light you will, your being acquainted with Mr. *W.* cannot materially hurt Mr. *C.* And as to the objection of this acquaintance caſting a reproach on your huſband's miniſtry, 'tis quite *needleſs*; for it is not to be ſuppoſed, if Mr. *C.* be the man you can approve of for a huſband, that you will leave his church when he himſelf preaches, to go after any other miniſter whatever; and whatever you may do at this time at proper opportunities, will I doubt not be ſo guided by *chriſtian* prudence, that he as a good and pious man cannot reaſonably object to it. But at preſent you and Mr. *C.* know very little of each other, and he certainly had no right to propoſe ſuch terms as theſe to you, till he had given you frequent opportunities of judging whether his heart and ſentiments were ſuch as you could intirely approve of. For my part, by the little I can judge in this affair, I believe him to be a good and a ſincere man, and I heartily wiſh him happy, and *that with you*, if it can be brought about without your doing any thing to wound your conſcience. In the mean time, whether this affair is ever concluded upon or not, frequent converſing together in the ſpirit of chriſtianity, may be a bleſſing to both: and how is it poſſible for you to give a direct anſwer to a man, till you are in ſome meaſure acquainted with him, and can judge of his temper and diſpoſitions? I was quite delighted with the ſoftneſs and affection for you with which your pappa mentioned this affair to me laſt night: if you ſay any thing of my writing to you, give my reſpects to him and your mamma, with love to Miſs *B.* and believe me

Your faithful

* *

To

To Mr. * * * *.

My dear ***,

JOIN with me in praiſing the free grace and mercy of God, which has ſo wonderfully diſplayed itſelf in your ſoul! I don't know whether your letter moſt aſtoniſhed or delighted me; but this I am ſure of, that I don't know how enough to expreſs my thankfulneſs to God in your behalf. The means ſo weak too! Nothing but a book put into your hands, which thouſands might have read without regarding it. No examples of vital religion, no one to urge or encourage you to ſeek redemption! But the Almighty can indeed work by the weakeſt means, and the pooreſt inſtruments; nothing is too hard for the Lord: and Oh may he perfect the work he has begun!—Oh gracious and ever-bleſſed Redeemer, continue thy mercy to this brother of my ſoul; convince him more and more of the dreadful ſtate he is in by nature, and the abſolute neceſſity of juſtification by faith alone! Oh juſtify him freely; grant him redemption through thy blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins according to the riches of thy grace: Fill him with all peace and joy in believing, and give him to go on in thy ſtrength, till he arrives at that fulneſs of faith here, and in the end to that eternal glory hereafter, which thou haſt purchaſed for thoſe who love thee! *Amen, Amen.*

I rejoice in your deſiring to receive the ſacrament. The only preparation required of us is repentance, faith, and love—love to God and all mankind. I would adviſe you to read immediately Mr. *Law's*

Anſwer to the Plain Account, &c. of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: this will explain the nature of this bleſſed ordinance to you, better than any book I know of. I have wrote out a little catalogue of books which I make my conſtant ſtudy, and which I hope will be yours, always remembering, that the Bible is to be eſteemed by us infinitely beyond any human compoſitions, let them be ever ſo excellent. Other books I ſhall occaſionally recommend to you, as they benefit my own mind, or are proper for the ſtate of yours.—As to forms of prayer in your private devotions, you have no occaſion for them, nay they would only be a means of keeping back your ſoul in its progreſs towards the ſpiritual life, the life which is hid with Chriſt in God. Pray from your own heart. There is no need of elegance of expreſſion, or connection, to make a prayer acceptable to God. The deſire of the heart is its prayer; and that once ſincerely turned to God, will certainly receive an anſwer of peace. When you firſt awake, ſtrive to fix your mind immediately on God: let the firſt book you open be the *New Teſtament*, there read, not ſeveral chapters, but juſt ſo much as you find will be food ſufficient for preſent meditation. If the firſt verſe you read particularly affects you, don't diſſipate the idea by reading further, but cloſe the book, and let that verſe have its full effect on your mind. When you fall on your knees before the Almighty, recollect the dangers and temptations you are moſt likely to fall into that day, and particularly pray to be kept by the grace of God in each of them. Earneſtly pray for power over the ſin which moſt eaſily beſets you. But above all things ſtrive in your morning and evening prayers to gain the moſt lively ſenſe of your own nothingneſs, nay to feel that you are even worſe than nothing, that you are by your fallen nature ſold under ſin, and deſerving nothing at the hand of God but e ernal puniſhment; and when your mind is deeply impreſſed with this

conſideration,

conſideration, then look to the lamb of God who taketh away the ſins of the world. There ſee the power by which your fallen nature may be reſtored: there ſee the blood by which you are cleanſed from all ſin: there ſee the full redemption purchaſed for you, and ſtrain every faculty of your ſoul eagerly to lay hold on this redemption: and be aſſured that the eternal Spirit of God will aſſiſt you in theſe your prayers. The Spirit itſelf, ſays St. *Paul*, maketh interceſſion for us.—In the courſe of the enſuing day, and in all occurrences, ſtrive to keep your heart in a ſtate of prayer, always ready to be lifted up to God; and this, even in the hurry of buſineſs, may be done, and no one be ſenſible of it except yourſelf. And be ſure, my dear, never to omit making uſe of any opportunity of doing good which falls in your way, either to the bodies or ſouls of your fellow creatures.—At night follow the ſame rule as in the morning; only examining, before you beg the protection of God for the night, every action of the paſt day: what good you have done, what left undone, what faults you have been guilty of, what mercies you have received, and accordingly addreſs yourſelf to the father of mercy.

I have time to ſay no more at preſent. Continue to write to me, and fail not to pray for

Your ever-affectionate

December 22, 1753.

January 7, 1754.

I Return my deareſt *** thanks for his laſt letter; the ſatisfaction which it and the converſation

we had together on *Saturday* gave me, is inexpreſſible. Oh may you, by the aſſiſting grace of God, continue in the happy way you are now in, and ſtill preſs forward to higher degrees of faith and love. But, my dear, you muſt not think too highly of me; I am one of the moſt unworthy objects of the free mercy of God. I ſtand more, perhaps, in need of your prayers than you of mine; you muſt *too* pray for me, and we muſt both ſtrive to increaſe and ſtrengthen each other. I ſhould be glad to know whether you, laſt night, notwithſtanding the diſagreeable manner of the preacher, received any comfort and ſatisfaction from what he ſaid: I own I did: his words (under all theſe diſadvantages) raiſed and ſtrengthened *me* in a remarkable manner; I wiſh it had been the ſame with you all; but your expectations were ſo highly raiſed by the name of ***, that an angel would hardly have ſatisfied them: and thus ſhall we be always diſappointed, if we look more at man than God. The moſt famous preacher, let his eloquence, his manner, his doctrine be ever ſo near perfection, can never make the ſoul taſte the words of ſalvation, unleſs the Spirit of God accompanies and inforces his preaching. And the ſame bleſſed Spirit can make the words of the meaneſt, the moſt deſpicable, the moſt diſagreeable preacher of the goſpel, effectual to awaken, to convince, and to comfort. But in order to our reaping theſe benefits, we muſt hear with *ſincerity* and with *ſingleneſs* of intention; not ſeeking to have our outward ears and eyes delighted, but deſiring the *ſincere* milk of the word to nouriſh and ſtrengthen our ſouls. Would it not be the higheſt madneſs to throw away the *water* of *life*, becauſe it was brought to us in an earthen veſſel? *Solomon* ſays, "To the *hungry ſoul* every bitter thing is "*ſweet*." So to the ſoul which really *hungers* and *thirſts* after *Chriſt* and his righteouſneſs, the ſound of the *goſpel* of *peace* (let the voice which proclaims it be *harſh* or *ſoft*) will be *ſweet indeed*. Oh may you

you and I, my dear ***, always find it ſo to *us!* May that bleſſed Redeemer in whom we have *peace*, be dearer to us than *light*, than *life*, than any thing we can form to our imagination either *here* or *hereafter!* In dangers, in difficulties, in temptations, may we ſtill look to him as our defence, our deliverer, our ſtrength. He is *all* in *all* throughout the oracles of God, both in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*: may he be *all* in *all* to our *ſouls*; may we walk by his *light*, conquer by his *ſtrength*, and in the end be joyful partakers of that everlaſting felicity which he has prepared for thoſe that love *him*. This is the conſtant wiſh and prayer of

Your affectionate

* *

Saturday the 17th.

I Received my deareſt ***'s long letter, and have more and more reaſon *indeed* to be thankful to God on your account. Oh how my ſoul exults in your happineſs, in your increaſe in faith, and love to *Chriſt!*—Your converſation with the captain delights me; no doubt but he rejoiced over you—there *you* ſee the true chriſtian ſpirit. The advice he gave you is excellent: Oh may we be both enabled to follow it! Thoſe who forſake all *for* Chriſt, will certainly find all *in* Chriſt.—As to ***, I would adviſe you to try firſt to raiſe in him a *deſire* to receive the ſacrament, before you perſuade him *to receive* it; and be earneſt at the throne of grace on his behalf. All probable means are to be made uſe of, but it is the *Spirit* of God alone who can convince of ſin.—I have

have been lately a good deal affected with the death of a lady in this neighboured, who led what is called an innocent life. Mr. *** attended her, and all his endeavours to convince her were in vain: her anſwers were, "Though ſhe had not made "ſuch a ſhew of religion as *ſome others*, yet ſhe "had *done* her duty, *&c.*" This is the moſt fatal deluſion of all, this blindneſs is the moſt dreadful ſtate in which a ſoul can launch into eternity! Can you and I be ever enough thankful to that God who has opened our eyes, to ſee the things which make for our peace? Was our whole life to be one continued act of praiſe, it would be nothing in compariſon to the bleſſings we have received; nay even the eternity, which we ſhall ſpend in continual *praiſe*, is not enough *fully* to expreſs all we owe to our *redeeming God*—*Redemption*, how much is comprehended in this word! and how ſweet does it ſound to a ſoul ſenſible of its wants! May that pathetic prayer my dear *** has made for me be heard; then ſhall I experience that *fulneſs* of redemption for which I long! Then ſhall I indeed be intirely dead to the world, and ſin, and live only to Chriſt. All this unſpeakable happineſs I as ſincerely wiſh to the brother of my ſoul as to myſelf;

And am his truly affectionate

* *

Sunday Afternoon, March 10, 1754.

My dear ***,

LAST night after you were gone, I read your letter, and thought of what you had told me with

with the greateſt ſatisfaction; what reaſon have you to be thankful, that God ſhould at ſo early a a time of your life convince you of *ſin*, and give you to *know* that you have redemption through Chriſt! How might you have plunged into all the follies and vices of youth, and laid up a large ſtock for future and bitter repentance, had not the free and unbounded grace of God diſplayed its power in your ſoul! Oh continue earneſtly to ſeek ſtill more and more of the *fulneſs* of Chriſt. Think not becauſe you have had a ſenſe of the *pardoning love* of God that you are to *reſt here*; no, ſtill ſeek for freſh evidences of his love to your ſoul; preſs forward with unwearied diligence towards the mark of the *high calling* of God in Chriſt Jeſus; ſeek and *ſtrive* to gain the *abiding witneſs* of the *Spirit*; ſtrive for that perfect renewal of heart by which you may ſay, "'Tis no more I that live, but Chriſt liveth "*in me.*"—You tell me you was aſſaulted, ſome days after you had this clear ſenſe of the mercies of God in Chriſt Jeſus, with doubts and fears. Whenever you are attacked in this manner again, argue thus with yourſelf:—"This peace and joy which "I felt, this ſenſe of forgiveneſs *ſeemed* to me to "be the work of God upon my ſoul: but was it "really ſo? Might not a warm imagination de-"ceive me, or might not the great enemy of ſouls "transform himſelf into an angel of light, in order "to lull me into a fatal ſecurity? But have I not "an infallible rule to judge by, whether this work "was of God? What were the fruits it produced? "Did I upon this grow more careleſs and remiſs? "Was my mind puffed up with ſpiritual pride? Did "I allow myſelf liberties which before I was afraid "to take?—Or did I, on the contrary, watch "ſtill more diligently againſt the moſt diſtant ap-"proaches of ſin? Did I find increaſing power "over ſins of the heart, as well as outward ſin? "Did I find in me a *ſtill* deeper ſenſe of my own "nothingneſs and the all-ſufficiency of my Re-

"deemer,

" deemer, and a large increaſe of the love of God " and all mankind? If theſe were the happy fruits " of this evidence, I have no cauſe to doubt this " work *was certainly* of God."

In this manner, my dear, if you will examine yourſelf, begging the aſſiſtance of the bleſſed Spirit to enable you to ſearch every winding and turning of your heart, you can never be deceived, and will always be able by the ſhield of faith to repel all the fiery darts of the devil. I thank you for your affectionate prayer for me (may God return all thoſe bleſſings double on your own head) and am

Your ever-affectionate Friend,

* *

I Did not expect to ſee my dear *** on *Saturday*, for the weather was ſo extremely bad, that I thought you would make the beſt of your way to ***. I have read your letter with great pleaſure, and hope you will continue thus diligently to examine the ſtate of your own mind: and that on every examination you will find an increaſe of that " treaſure which never faileth."—I rejoice that you have been happy enough to ſuffer reproach for the ſake of Chriſt, and more eſpecially for the grace given you to *ſuffer joyfully*. You may depend upon it that there is the ſame real diſtinction between chriſtians and the world now, that there was when our bleſſed maſter ſaid, " Becauſe ye are not " of the world, therefore the world hateth you." And how ought our hearts to exult with praiſe and thankſgiving, when we can ſay *we* are *not* of the *world!* What unſpeakable happineſs will it be for us to be found (when our Redeemer comes to judgment)

ment) among thoſe who were not aſhamed of him in this "adulterous and perverſe generation!" Is any thing too much to ſuffer when animated by the hopes of having theſe glorious words addreſſed to us, "Come ye bleſſed, *&c.*"

I am now with my poor aunt ***, who is in great affliction for the loſs of poor Mrs. *C.* See my dear ***, how little all that is eſteemed in this world avails, when God is pleaſed to lay his hand upon us! Here was youth, beauty, riches, friends; but how as in a moment, was the poſſeſſor of all theſe cut off! and by a dreadful diſeaſe brought to be the companion of loathſome worms! Alas, how is that ſweet ſmile which once ſat upon her countenance, now changed to ghaſtlineſs! How are her fine features and delicate complexion now become even horrible to behold! Oh that ſome proud beauty would here ſtop, and conſider what ſhe herſelf muſt one day aſſuredly be! And Oh that this thought might ſtrike me ſtill with deeper ſeriouſneſs, that ſhe who was my friend and confident even from my earlieſt youth; ſhe whom I loved with *more* than *ſiſter's* tenderneſs; is now—alas, where is now her precious ſoul? Deareſt Redeemer, thy grace is all-ſufficient, and thy mercies infinite! Is it not now rejoicing with thee? Were not all thoſe helps afforded her by thy boundleſs love which even to the laſt her ill-judging friends denied her? O had I but ſeen her rejoicing in the love of God, and filled with the proſpects of a bleſſed eternity, how would my ſoul have joyed in her departure! How would my heart have dilated itſelf with the glorious thought, that my friend was delivered from the gilded ſnares that ſurrounded her, and gone to ſure and unbounded happineſs! And even now I cannot doubt the mercies of my God; ſurely we ſhall meet again, and join in eternal praiſes to the great author of our ſalvation!

I am with all affection your faithful Friend,

* *

My

My dearest ***,

I Am obliged to you for your letter, though the firſt ſide of it frighted me extreamly. I have been ſo accuſtomed to ſee you ſtrong in faith and rejoicing in God, that the very mention of weak faith alarmed me; but thanks be to God, who has not ſuffered you to be tempted above what you were able to bear, but has with the temptation alſo made a way for you to eſcape: and I hope this trial will be a means of making you ſtill more watchful. You have need to watch and pray always, and more eſpecially at thoſe times when your enemies ſeem to be at peace with you. When we are bleſſed with the light of God's countenance, and have power over the ſin which moſt eaſily beſets us, we are very apt to be off our guard; and by being ſecure, we lay ourſelves open to danger from that grand tempter, who is always watching over us for evil; and if we take not care to keep the *loving eye* of our *mind* conſtantly fixed on that God who is always watching over us for good, we muſt fall. Here all our ſtrength lies; but God will not give us this ſtrength unleſs we carefully and continually ſeek it: therefore, now the free grace of God has again raiſed you up, be doubly careful in every thought, word, and action, and be aſſured that your merciful Redeemer will be ever ready to hear you when you call upon him. That his love may daily abound in your heart more and more, is the ſincere prayer of

July 12, 1754. *Your affectionate*

* *

Monday

Monday, Auguſt 5, 1754.

My dear ***,

YOU are indeed a great ſtranger; ſure you might contrive to call, though it were but for half an hour.—I am glad you heard Mr. ***; for to *hear him* and to *profit*, to a *ſincere* ſoul is the ſame thing. I thank God too, that you are in ſo happy a ſtate of mind, and your ſoul ſo charmingly alive to God; that you ſeem ſo much in love with holineſs, and ſo eagerly preſſing after it in all its branches: depend upon it, for every degree of holineſs you gain here, you will alſo gain a new degree of happineſs both *here* and *hereafter*. The nearer the ſoul is to the image of Chriſt, the more it will love him, and the more it will be loved by him, and by the Father through him: and this love is the higheſt felicity both of ſaints and angels. Imperfect (in degree, as it is here below, the ſoul that taſtes it would not change it for all that earth or heaven could give. And what then muſt it be above in the kingdom of eternal glory! where the ſoul, delivered from this earthly clog, will have no hindrances or obſtructions to the pure love of God, but will be wholly ſwallowed up in it.

Your *** gave me an account of your yeſterday's converſation: I congratulate you that you can ſo boldly and judiciouſly too, ſpeak for the truth. I pray God to increaſe you in every good word and work, and am,

Your ever-affectionate, Friend,

* * *

My dear ***,

I Return you many thanks for your letter. Juſt before I received it I was thinking of you, and to tell you the truth, with ſome fear (occaſioned by your long abſence) either that you were grown cold to me, or what was infinitely worſe, were grown cold to the ways of God. But your letter diſpelled all my fears, and I rejoice and give thanks to our heavenly Father for his great and manifold mercies to your ſoul!—I wiſh I could have ſeen you often alone in your laſt illneſs, but that you know was impoſſible: however, the ſmall time I was with you gave me the utmoſt ſatisfaction, and I cannot be enough ſenſible of the goodneſs of my God, that I (weak and unworthy as I am) ſhould be made an inſtrument of ſuch increaſe of comfort to you. Had you then died, you would doubtleſs now be ſinging praiſes to God and the Lamb; but as you are ſuffer'd to continue longer upon earth, it is to this end, that you ſhould approve yourſelf a faithful ſervant to God, in the midſt of this crooked and perverſe generation, that you ſhould ſhine as a light in the world, and by ſpending yourſelf in the ſervice of God here, increaſe your capacity of happineſs hereafter. God is merciful to you in a peculiar manner. To be kept as you are, when ſo much engaged in buſineſs, and with ſo few opportunities of attending the means of grace, calls for the utmoſt gratitude; therefore let no occaſion paſs of ſhewing your love to that Redeemer, who has thus ſaved you from ſin and the love of the world. All you can do, is by far too ſmall a return for ſuch unbounded goodneſs. Your preſent ſtate of mind is a glorious and happy one indeed;

deed; but ſuffer not yourſelf to be off your watch for one moment, for Satan is always watching to hurt a ſoul that is thus happily eſcaped from his ſnare. But your certain help lies in Chriſt; keep therefore the eye of the mind fixed upon him, and you will ſtill go on conquering, and to conquer.

I am your ever affectionate Friend,

Sunday, * *
Dec. 8, 1754.

My dear ***,

I AM delighted with the rules you have laid for your conduct: you muſt conſtantly look up to God for grace and ſtrength faithfully to practice them. I rejoice in your love to your Redeemer; and be aſſured, the longer you live the more you will be convinced that this is your only ſure refuge and laſting happineſs. In regard to your going ſo often to ***, take the following advice; ſhun, as you would poiſon, every thing that you find a means of making you leſs alive to God. Life is ſhort. We have a great work to do, and God only knows how few of thoſe hours, which are ever on the wing, may be given us to do it in. Therefore loſe not a moment! Remember a chriſtian cannot ſtand ſtill; he muſt go either forwards or backwards; and if you have not made ſome advances toward heaven ſince the clock ſtruck laſt, you have gone back towards the contrary road. Keep this conſtantly in your mind, particularly in your *viſits*. —May the peace and love of God be ever with

you, and fail not to remember at the throne of grace,

Your ever-affectionate Friend,

* * *

Nov. 27,
1755.

To Miſs * * * *.

Sunday Morning.

My dear Friend,

I Have juſt time enough to wiſh that your ſoul may this day proſper, and that God may be found by you in all his ordinances. Oh that his love may be more and more ſhed abroad in your heart! And this it certainly will be, if you walk cloſely with him, and ſuffer not your imagination to lead you from your only true happineſs. Oh ſtrive continually after a conſtant recollection, and communion with God.—I know the unprofitable manner in which you will be employed this afternoon; but this need not hinder your heart from being with your Saviour, he will ſupport and comfort you.—Take care that you run not into making obſervations either on the perſons, manners, or dreſs of your viſitors: four young ladies in a houſe together, are in the utmoſt danger from this ſin; and depend upon it, it is as contrary to chriſtian love as lying or ſtealing. *Adieu.*

* *

My

My dear Friend,

I Have been thinking, ſince I ſaw you, of all the ſnares to which you are going to be expoſed, and I ſincerely pray that God may protect you in every danger, and hold up your goings in *his paths*. But in order to gain his gracious protection, you muſt take the greateſt care that you do nothing to grieve his bleſſed Spirit, and cauſe him to depart from you. And this any ſinful compliance will certainly do: therefore when you are deſired to do any thing unbecoming a chriſtian, fear not (young as you are) to bear your teſtimony for God againſt an evil world. But do it in the ſpirit of meekneſs; and if by this means you draw upon yourſelf the appellations of whimſical, obſtinate, and ridiculous, look upon the reproach as matter of rejoicing, and as adding a greater luſtre to the crown you will hereafter receive.—There is one temptation, which at your age is peculiarly dangerous, and that is a deſire of being thought handſome. You muſt be ever on your watch againſt this; for it will raiſe a thouſand tempers in your ſoul, as contrary to the mind which was in Chriſt as darkneſs is to light. There is nothing which is a greater counter-poiſon to this deſire, than bringing the mind to be contented, nay even to rejoice that another ſhould outſhine us. Let Miſs *J.* be the means by which you acquire a conqueſt over this firſt-born of female pride: ſet yourſelf every day to take delight in her beauty, to wiſh for its embelliſhment, and to be moſt pleaſed when ſhe appears to the greateſt advantage.—If when you read this you colour, and cry "Dear! what can ſhe mean? this is vaſtly "odd!"—depend upon it there is ſomething in

your heart which makes the advice I have given highly neceſſary; and fail not, as you prize your peace of mind and increaſe of grace, to put it in practice. We ſhould enjoy much more of the light of God's countenance, and of that peace which paſſeth all underſtanding, if we would attend to, and watch againſt, thoſe occaſions of falling, which from their commonneſs we are apt to call *little*.— A ſoul is often caſt into heavineſs for hours, by an unguarded word. — You will not, my love, be angry with me that I deal thus freely with you: I watch over your ſoul in tender love; and though ſenſible of my own unworthineſs, either to adviſe or perſuade; though ſenſible of my own great and manifold ſins and imperfections, I cannot deſiſt from guarding you againſt all that may hinder your being made perfect in the love of God. I am

Your ever-affectionate

November 30, 1754. * *

I Thank you, my love, for writing to me, and rejoice that you are happy: God never fails to hear thoſe that call upon him, and is gracious above all that we can either aſk or think. As to my illneſs, it is extremely troubleſome, but I believe not dangerous; and I muſt continue to bear it for a good while longer without attempting to remove it, becauſe my apothecary himſelf knows not what to make of it: however, I am juſt as I ought to be; I delight to do and to ſuffer the will of God, and his mercies are ſweet to my ſoul. I am in that happy ſtate of reſignation, that I have not a wiſh, but for an increaſe of grace and holineſs. *Sunday*

my

my ſoul longed after the ſacrament, and the tears came in my eyes, becauſe I could not go to church. But are the flowing ſtreams of redeeming love confined to place or time? I found indeed they were not; for my ſoul was at home ſweetly repleniſhed, with every bleſſing I could have hoped for at the altar. How much are thoſe to be pitied who know not the love of God! How much are thoſe to be pitied who ſet their hearts on any thing in this ſtate of exiſtence! How poor, how low, how trifling is every thing, that does not look towards eternity! I have ſuch an experimental ſenſe of the nothingneſs of all wordly things, that they ſeem no more to me than dancing puppets; and I am ſometimes ready to affront my brother and Mr. ***, by ſmiling at the important air with which they talk of their *buſineſs*, as they call it.—I think there is very little probability that I ſhall be fit to come to the wedding. Pray God keep your ſiſter's heart in this time of danger and diſtraction, and bleſs you both with the bleſſings of his children.

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January 7, 1755.

To the Rev. Mr. ****.

Reverend Sir,

YOUR character for candour and piety takes from me all fear that you ſhould be offended at the addreſs of a perſon unknown, *even* though this addreſs is deſigned to point out ſomething amiſs in you; which it is abſolutely neceſſary (for the good of your own ſoul, and for the eternal welfare of

thoſe

thoſe who hear you) that you ſhould amend.—You *believe!*—You *feel* the power, and live the *life* of *faith!* —Oh why will you not ſtrive that others may be partakers of like happineſs with you?—I know your general manner of preaching: I myſelf have heard you; and while my ear has been delighted with your affecting delivery, your elegant language, and well-turned periods, my heart has *bled* to think that *ſuch talents* ſhould be ſo miſerably perverted: *bled* for *you*, and for thoſe *poor ſouls*, whom this way of preaching lulls into a fatal *ſecurity*. Pardon my freedom of ſpeech; pardon my boldneſs towards you; but you yourſelf will acknowledge, that where the foundation is unſound, the building muſt fall; and no true foundation can be laid except Jeſus Chriſt. Your own experience muſt tell you, that a divine power can alone change the heart; that all outward regularity of behaviour, all rounds and forms of devotion, and all moral duties, without this change are utterly unavailing, and only like beautifying the outſide of a ſepulchre, which within is full of dead mens bones and of all uncleanneſs. *You* are ſenſible *too*, that faith in a dying Redeemer is the only means given us by which this change of heart can be effected. To what purpoſe then is it to tell *poor*, *loſt*, *undone* man of the *dignity* of his *rational* nature, and the beauty of *virtue*? — Dear Sir, for the ſake of that God whom you love and *adore*, *away* with theſe *ſhadows*, and ſubſtitute in their places realities. How would it delight the heart of ſeveral of your friends (who greatly love and eſteem you, and who wiſh well to the goſpel of Chriſt) to ſee you with all the force of eloquence labouring to convince your hearers of the *ſin* of their *nature*, their condemnation in the ſight of God, and their utter incapacity to help *themſelves*; and then proclaiming to them, "Behold the *Lamb* of *God*, who taketh away the "*ſins* of the *world!*"

I am

I am ſenſible of the difficulties you will have to encounter, in thus changing your manner of preaching: but though the battle be hard to fight, great will be the glory of the victory. 'Tis true, your enemies are ſtrong and powerful; the devil, the world, all the wicked, and all the ſelf-righteous will be joined together againſt you: but look up with an eye of faith, and ſee how many more are for you. Think of the holy angels rejoicing over every ſinner converted by your means; think that the captain of your ſalvation, your God and Redeemer, will be ever near to help, to ſtrengthen and comfort you! And conſider what unutterable joy your ſoul will feel, when at that period of time which is the moſt delightful to the true chriſtian, you can with firm confidence cry out with St. *Paul*, "I have fought a good fight, I have "finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith; hence-"forth is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs."

I am (though your unknown and unworthy)

Your truly affectionate Friend.

To Mr. G***.

I Am much obliged to you for your letter to me; and if it will increaſe your joy to know that I love my Saviour more than *health*, or *light*, or *life*, be aſſured that I do; and that I ſhould think myſelf the moſt ungrateful and vile of all creatures if I did not.—It is my conſtant and earneſt deſire every day, nay every hour, to increaſe in the knowledge and love of God, and to be ſaved not only from the guilt, but alſo from the power of ſin.

ſin. I know that the grace of God through Chriſt is ſufficient for me; I know that the blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin; and I know (bleſſed be God for giving me that knowledge) that I *have* redemption through his blood, even the *forgiveneſs* of my ſins. Think now what a wretch I ſhould be, if I did not love this Redeemer, and if I did not wiſh above all things to be conformed to his image?—And in conſequence of my thus loving God becauſe he firſt loved me, I love every creature which God has made, and every ſoul of man, without any regard had to ſects, names, or parties. The *Moravian* church, though I am certain at this time it is over-run with *dreadful errors*,* I love, pity, and pray for. Oh may the God of love and unbounded mercy, convince and reſtore it!—I thank you for the glorious advice you give me, of "living very near the croſs:" *there* is life indeed! Life freely given, to every ſoul that ſeeks it. And that you and I may ever partake of this life, is the hearty wiſh of your

* Herein this good woman was egregiously deceived, as I, and every chriſtian who * * knows them, can teſtify. See the writings of their late Oppoſers, &c.

To the Rev. Mr. * * * *.

November 30, 1755.

Dear Sir,

I Am much obliged to you for your apoſtolical letter, and for the truly chriſtian joy you expreſs for my baby's happineſs. That I have felt all that the greateſt ſenſibility of temper is capable of feeling on ſuch an occaſion, is certain: but here has been my great comfort, that, in every thing which concerned

cerned the child; I have had neither will nor wiſh of my own. He was peculiarly dedicated to God, even before he was born: and *ſince*, he has been daily, nay almoſt hourly offered up; and that not in word only, but in truth: and as it has pleaſed God to accept him as a ſacrifice, rather than as a ſervrnt, I have nothing to ſay, but "thy will be "done!" If I could have ſeen you, or any of my chriſtian friends at this time, when all the fineſt ſprings of human nature were on the rack, it would have been a great ſatisfaction; but it pleaſed God to with-hold all creature comfort from me; and though his own arm ſuſtained me, it was in a manner not ſenſibly perceived by my ſoul: ſo that I had the great bleſſing of bearing ſomething of the *croſs*. And this I look upon to be a particular bleſſing to me, becauſe I have been ſo wholly led by love, that before this, I knew but very little of what it was to *ſuffer* the will of God. In ſhort, every diſpenſation of my heavenly father towards me, is nothing but mercy and unbounded goodneſs. I *ſee* and I *adore*.—The Lord Jeſus bleſs and preſerve you in body, ſoul, and ſpirit. Fail not to pray for

Your obliged and affectionate

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Monday, December 22, 1755.

Dear Sir,

I See with delight, that you *are ſet up* as a mark, for every one of the *devil*'s tools to ſhoot *at*: and *he* certainly wounds the deepeſt by thoſe, who, while they are working for him, imagine they are doing

doing God service, and acting with *christian prudence.* How often is *that wisdom* which comes from *beneath*, taken for that which comes from *above!* And *fear* of man, *secret* desire of preferment, and being *ashamed* of the *cross* of *Christ*, dignified with the title of true *discretion*, and caution not to give offence!—'Tis hard, indeed, to be wounded in the house of your friends; nothing, perhaps, is more painful to nature, but if they have called the master of the house *Beelzebub*, how much more those of his houshold! — Those servants of Christ who are designed by him for *eminent usefulness*, must of necessity have the largest share of tribulation: for the highest place of honour under *our king*, is that of the sharpest sufferings. I should not wonder if the tongues and pens of all your brethren (except two or three) were employed against *you*; and I am so far from being sorry (on your account) for Mr. *L*'s preaching against you, that I look upon it as a *precious* and *blessed mark*, and a *seal* to the truth of your ministry. —Happy parting, indeed, with the world! And happy parting with every comfort in it, if nearer union with God is the consequence! Oh cease not to pray for me, that all things may *thus* work together for my good!—This poor dream of life will soon be at an end; and *then*, if those who have only given a cup of cold water for the sake of Christ, shall not lose their reward, what an exceeding and eternal weight of glory attends those happy souls who constantly labour, and patiently suffer for *him!*

I am your obliged and faithful

Friend and Servant,

P.S. You have been pleased to ask my opinion, or what I understand by Schism (as its commonly called) or leaving a Church one once belongd to? You cannot be better resolved than by Mr W. in his note on Jude 19. viz, That it is a sin, & a very heinous one, to separate from the Church, is out of all question. But then it shd be observed, x

x See the next P.

To the Rev. Mr. * * * *.

Sunday Afternoon, Oct. 13, 1754.

My dear Friend,

I Was this morning (though unſeen by you) preſent at your ſermon on the *public* worſhip of God, and ſat impatiently, expecting and longing to hear that name mentioned, by which alone cometh Salvation. Surely, thought I, when all his *heathen* and *moral* motives are done, I ſhall at laſt hear him urge that *beſt* and *moſt* prevailing motive to our joining together in the praiſe of God, the exceeding riches of his mercy to us in Jeſus Chriſt. But alas! how were my expectations fruſtrated? and how did my heart ſink when the ſermon was ended!—If there is any faith to be given, either to the words or behaviour of man, you are a *Chriſtian*. But what did you ſay *here*, more than *Socrates* might have ſaid? You will pardon my boldneſs; God knows the ſincerity of my heart, when I proteſt, that it is only from a motive of love to your ſoul; and the ſouls of thoſe which hear you, that I write with ſuch freedom. Give me leave then to aſk, Have you, for your own ſoul in particular, found redemption through the blood of Chriſt? I have all the reaſon imaginable, from your ſweet converſation, to believe that you have. But how is it then that you could preach *one* ſuch ſermon as this? Oh ſearch well into your own heart. Is there not ſome root of bitterneſs remaining, ſome evil ſhame, which renders you thus inconſiſtent? Had I not heard you myſelf, I could not have thought it poſ-

×1. That by the Ch: is meant, A Body of lev.g Christians, who are an habitation of God thro' Spt. 2. That by Separat.g is understood, renounc.g all religious intercourse with them; no longer join.g w.th y.m in solemn Prayer & the Sacraments.

ſible, for you to have preached in this manner, after the glorious things you have ſaid to me. You have called me friend. Take this letter as the higheſt proof of friendſhip I could poſſibly give you. Is it not ſo, for your ſake to run the hazard of being thought *bold* and *aſſuming?* If you are offended, tell me ſo *plainly*, but at the ſame time *freely* forgive me; and believe me, with the ſincereſt wiſhes for your preſent uſefulneſs and everlaſting happineſs,

Your ever obliged and affectionate Friend,

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To the Rev. Mr. * * * *.

December 25, 1754.

Dear Sir,

MAY this bleſſed day in which the ſun of righteouſneſs firſt aroſe on our dark world, bring a new acceſſion of light, and peace, and joy to *your* precious ſoul! may the *power* of God accompany every word you utter, and give you this day to enlarge your conqueſts over the prince of darkneſs. Oh, give my full heart leave to expand itſelf in praying for you, in bleſſing you, and in thanking you, for your ſurprizing goodneſs to me; no, never ſhall you find *me* ungrateful; *that* God in whom alone I truſt for ſtrength, will preſerve me from falling into this *meaneſt* of all crimes.—I ſhall not I fear have the delightful ſatisfaction of hearing you to-morrow, and therefore could not forbear writing to-day; beſides, I am by illneſs prevented attending the public worſhip of God, ſo that I have need of this

this comfort. Every thing has ſucceeded here beyond my hopes, your preſence has greatly diſpelled every cloud of prejudice, and fear of man. In ſhort, when I conſider the goodneſs of God and my own abſolute unworthineſs, I am loſt in aſtoniſhment: dear Sir, pray that I may make a proper improvement of all theſe bleſſings, and particularly of that *exceeding* great bleſſing your friendſhip. Oh Sir! may I *indeed* ſay *your* friendſhip? The Lord Jeſus bleſs and reward you! expreſſion fails me when I would thank you as I ought, and tell how much I am

Your ever obliged and affectionate.

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Dear Sir,

YOUR anſwer to my quſtion, on What is the proper foundation of our rejoicing in temporal bleſſings, is perfectly ſatisfactory, and I thank you for it. What you ſay of Mr. *P*'s tract is juſt what I wanted: poſſibly ſome fit ſeaſon may be given me to make a good uſe of it. One would imagine that if ſingleneſs of eye, and ſincerity of heart were really found in all thoſe of our miniſters, who in a meaſure preach the goſpel, there would ſcarce be room left even for the ſhadow of a diſpute. But this is only imagination; for I cannot help obſerving of ſome, for whoſe ſincerity I would anſwer with my life, that they are far from being conſiſtent long together. I have lately been attacked with a mighty pretty diſtinction (and from my ignorance a new one to me) in reſpect of the doctrine of aſſurance of forgiveneſs of ſin.—Mr. ***

ſays it is of the *eſſence* of *faith*; but moſt of the old *Puritans*, together with a heap of great names (of which I remember not one) ſay it is of the *fruits* of *faith*. — A poor weak woman, who has not learnt logic, may be eaſily puzzled with the nicety of a logical diſtinction: but ſtill I could plainly ſee, that let it be eſſence or fruits, there was a manifeſt neceſſity for enforcing the doctrine: becauſe a tree which brings not forth its proper fruits, is a barren tree.—A faith which brings not forth its proper fruits, is a dead faith, and conſequently unprofitable. — The anſwer is, "A tree may be "alive, and yet not bring forth fruit immediately." —Well, but this makes nothing againſt the neceſſity there is that it *ſhould* bring forth fruit, in order to make it a profitable tree.—But then we have a homily to fly to:—"The homily on ſalvation ſays "nothing of aſſurance."—If the homily contradicts St. *Paul*, the homily is nothing to me.—"O, you won't refer it to that, "becauſe it makes againſt you." —I do not ſo much as know what is in it.—"It only "ſays a *ſure truſt* and *confidence*."—I think a *ſure confidence* is nearly the ſame with aſſurance.—"No, they "are very different."——Now, Sir, you muſt be ſo good to furniſh me with two or three of your ſtrong arguments, to pull down this *Babel* tower, which *our friends* are building. I ſhould alſo be glad, if you would tell me by what happy art you are always *conſiſtent* in doctrine, as well as practice: for I can find no one elſe that is ſo.—Difference of opinion I regard not; I could enjoy fellowſhip of ſpirit with a truly ſincere *Predeſtinarian*, *Papiſt*, or *Quaker*. Inconſiſtency is the thing alone which hurts me. When I find this in people whom I know to be in ſo much higher a ſtate of grace than myſelf, and whom I love and honour, it diſquiets me I own, by far too much; and my ſoul, like *Noah's* dove, flies ſolitary about, and finds no place of reſt on the face of the whole earth; till at laſt with one olive-leaf, and *only one*, ſhe returns joyful to

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the ark.—Give me leave, Sir, to intreat of you (if you ſhould have a little time to ſpare) that you will juſt point out to me, *Firſt*, What are the probable cauſes of this inconſiſtency, in thoſe who have *truly* ſincerity of heart, and ſingleneſs of eye. *Secondly*, What is the moſt probable means of curing this diſtemper of the mind. And, *Thirdly*, How I may avoid falling into it myſelf, and keep my ſoul from being diſquieted, when I find it in thoſe whom I highly eſteem.——I hope God continues to preſerve to us your precious health, and that your long journies may be a means of ſtrengthening and eſtabliſhing it.—I doubt not but the work of the Lord proſpers in your hands, and that you will have much reaſon to rejoice in the fruit of your labours. How happy are you to be always thus employed, in ſuch eminent ſervice for your maſter? You live almoſt the life of an unembodied ſpirit; and I live nearly the life of a *plant*. But thank God, it is abſolutely certain, that this immortal ſpirit of mine, which is thus preſſed in on every ſide, and weighed down with matter, will ſome time burſt its bonds, and break the bars of its priſon; and then, how it will ſoar! Nothing ſure can equal the life, the joy, the *glorious liberty*, which a ſpirit muſt feel, when firſt delivered from its heavy clog! Farewel! May our dear Redeemer continually watch over you, and bleſs you in every thought, word, and action!

I am, &c.

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September 17.

Dear Sir,

HOW ſhall I find words to thank you for your ſweet expreſſions of care and friend-

ſhip for my ſoul? Ten thouſand thouſand bleſſings on your own for this kindneſs.——I hope I may in *one* ſenſe ſay, that my ſoul proſpers, becauſe I deſire nothing but that the will of God may be done in me and by me. But I have not at preſent thoſe overflowings of joy I have at ſome times experienced: the cries of a ſickly infant, which touch all the fineſt ſprings of human nature, caſt a kind of heavineſs over my ſoul; and the perpetual and ſtrict watch I am obliged to keep over my heart, for fear the leaſt murmuring or complaining thought ſhould ariſe in it (which I would rather die than ſuffer) ſeem rather to reſtrain my ſoul from the glorious freedom ſhe once had, of loſing herſelf in the heights and depths of divine love.—Oh bleſſed hours of abſtraction from all creatures, and joyful communion with the fountain and centre of all happineſs, when will ye return? When it is the will of my heavenly Father that you ſhould return: and in that divine will I reſt contented, willing, nay pleaſed, to ſuffer any thing, every thing, ſo I may be kept from ſin. I have lately had inward temptations, buzzing about my mind, like inſects in a ſummer's day; but, by looking to Jeſus, I as eaſily diſperſe them, as the waving hand diſperſes thoſe little troubleſome animals: and, thanks to my Redeemer's boundleſs mercy, I ſtill enjoy in my inmoſt ſoul, a peace, which I would not loſe for millions of worlds. But I greatly want conſtant recollection, and a mortified humble ſpirit. You know the weight your words have with me; give me, I beg of you, ſome directions for obtaining this. I cannot take my leave, without thanking you again and again, for enquiring after my ſoul: Oh how dearly do I love you for this goodneſs: May the tender mercies of God be with you! May the eternal Comforter meet and bleſs you in every word of your tongue, and in every thought of your heart!

Your ever-grateful and affectionate

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February

February 28.

I Shall not forget the great reaſon I had to be thankful both to God and you, for our *laſt* converſation. It ſeemed to me, that I had more liberty of ſpeaking to you than uſual, though a thouſand things were yet left unſaid; and you led me to make many obſervations, which I hope will be of *laſting* benefit to my ſoul. You have taught me to ſee the amazing wiſdom and loving-kindneſs of God in ſeveral inſtances, which I ſhould not elſe have thought of; and I am fully ſatisfied with all his diſpoſals: knowing he orders all things well, I chearfully ſubmit; and I truſt that ſtrength will be given me to walk on in the way ſet before me, "though ſorrowful, yet (in one ſenſe) always re-"joicing."—Is it not a great bleſſing that the thorns are mixed with roſes? This is infinitely more than I deſerve.—How true is it, that the higher ſatisfaction we have in any thing, beſides God, the greater pain muſt neceſſarily attend it? I have often been taught this leſſon, in various degrees, each riſing above the other; and yet I have not learnt wiſdom. And who ſhall teach me *this* wiſdom? Why you yourſelf can lay down moſt excellent rules, but it is God alone who can give me power to practiſe them. I plainly ſee the neceſſity of having every thought brought into ſubjection to Chriſt: it muſt be thus, if I would attain ſettled peace and conſtant recollection.—In your extract from *Molinos*, the ſtate of mind I am ſeeking is well deſcribed in theſe words: "The ſoul that is "entered into the heaven of peace, acknowledges "itſelf full of God, and his ſupernatural gifts; "becauſe it lives grounded in a *pure love*, receiv-

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" ing equal pleaſure in light and darkneſs, in night " and day, in *affliction* and *conſolation*: through " this holy and heavenly *indifferency*, it never loſes " its peace in *adverſity*, nor its *tranquility* in *tribu-* " *lation*, but ſees itſelf full of unſpeakable enjoy- " ments."———And again, " Though the valley " of the lower faculties of the ſoul, is ſuffering " *tribulations*, *combats*, *martyrdoms*, and ſuggeſtions, " yet at the *ſame time*, on the lofty mountain of the " higher part of the ſoul, the true ſun caſts its " beams; it enflames and inlightens it, and ſo it " becomes clear, peaceable, reſplendent, quiet, " ſerene, being a mere ocean of joy."—But alas! you will ſay, " How far are *you* from this ſtate!" True, I am far from it indeed. And yet I have ſometimes experienced ſome little glimmerings of it, but they have been ſoon diſturbed: and then I have fondly ſaid to myſelf, Well, when this trial, when this temptation, or difficulty is over, I ſhall return to my ſweet peace, and my ſoul will be wholly ſwallowed up in the love of God. Vain imagination! I think I have *now experimentally* learnt a truth, which before only floated in my brain, " That the " peace of a chriſtian does not conſiſt in being free " from temptations and difficulties, but in ſtedfaſtly " and calmly conquering them."—Once more, the Lord preſerve you! Could my prayers avail any thing, what bleſſings would you receive, in body, ſoul, and ſpirit! Oh farewel, farewel! And when your ſoul is moſt carried up to God, remember to pray for

Your grateful and affectionate

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April

April 2.

Dear Sir,

I Return you many thanks for writing ſo ſoon, and particularly for filling *two* ſides of your paper. My ſoul was as much enlivened by your letter, as the earth, the birds, and flowers, are by the rays of the ſun, after a long and heavy rain. May your bleſſed maſter reward you for all your goodneſs to me!

I thank God I have in ſome meaſure learnt that grand leſſon, "Not as I will, but as *thou* wilt;" and I continually pray that he may teach it me more and more. The preſent idle and half-dying life I am obliged to lead, greatly needs this temper of mind; and it is all the free mercy of my Redeemer that I can *now* ſay, his grace is ſufficient for me.

In regard to temporal bleſſings, I have now and then a little diſpute with ſome of my religious friends, and I want your authority to ſtrengthen my arguments.—They ſay, Whatever temporal bleſſing God gives, you are to rejoice and take a pleaſure in it, as his gift. And I ſay, Whatever temporal bleſſing God beſtows, the motive for your rejoicing ſhould be *merely* the *will* of God: for if you rejoice in the bleſſing conſidered as a happineſs in itſelf (though referring it to God with a thankful heart) you are building on the ſand, and your happineſs will be ſhaken, if not overturned, by the firſt ſtorm that beats upon it. But if the *will* of God be the motive of your rejoicing, you build your happineſs on a foundation which never can be moved. The preſent bleſſing, indeed, may vaniſh away, but your cauſe of rejoicing ſtill remaineth ſure and ſtedfaſt, in time and in eternity.—Some people think

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the *way* I am in at preſent a prodigious happineſs and the greateſt of worldly bleſſings, and will aſk me, "Are you not pleaſed?"—I anſwer, I am pleaſed with every thing which is the will of God; and the anſwer is thought an odd one; but I cannot help it, I dare not make any other.

You want me to ſay ſomething upon Chriſtian love ripened in eternity. But this is a theme for angels; my ſoul is too low, too dull to attempt to write upon it; I can only wiſh and pray to be a partaker of it. Farewel; may the ſweeteſt ſtreams of redeeming love ever fill your ſoul.

I am unalterably yours,

* *

July 18.

Dear Sir,

I Can truly ſay, that I *would* with joy devote all I have, and all I am to God, and gladly ſpend every hour in his ſervice. But the difficulties I find in the way are *indeed inſuperable* to *me*, though not ſo I think to every one, at leaſt if I may judge from ſome few inſtances I have ſeen ſince my acquaintance with *you*.—You yourſelf, *even outwardly*, appear to me to ſpend every hour to the glory of God; and for this reaſon I look upon you to be the happieſt of mankind. When I ſee you ſpent with fatigue, your eyes half cloſed, and your outward man ſeeming to *haſten* to its diſſolution, though I would freely give my own life and ſtrength to increaſe yours, I almoſt *envy* you this *glorious fatigue*, and ſay to myſelf, How happy, how bleſſed is this man, thus to *ſpend* and be *ſpent* in the ſervice of his Redeemer!

deemer! Think me not preſumptuous when I ſay, that I place you conſtantly before my mind, as my *living* example. Outwardly it certainly is impoſſible for me to follow you, but inwardly!—Oh, Sir, that I could in every faculty of my *ſoul* be a follower of you, even as *you are* of *Chriſt!*—You bid me *love enough*; and doubtleſs if I could *love enough*, I ſhould (as you ſay) do enough, for *perfect love* is *perfect liberty*, liberty to conquer all ſin, and attain to all holineſs. This is the glorious privilege of the children of God; and this my ſoul pants after. But though I can ſincerely ſay that I love God above all things, yet it is very evident that I do not love enough, becauſe the fruits of this perfect love are not produced in my ſoul. Sometimes my enemies ſeem intirely conquered, and my mind is ſmooth and calm, as were the waters after Chriſt had ſaid to them, *Peace, be ſtill.* But when I ſeem thus ſtrong, I am (to my inexpreſſible ſhame and confuſion) found to be *weakneſs* itſelf: ſome trifle, which perhaps had appeared too contemptible even to be thought of, will be the means of my *inwardly* falling. But thanks be to God I have this given me,

"Quick as the apple of an eye,
"The ſlighteſt touch of ſin to feel."

To feel, and immediately to fly to that blood of ſprinkling which alone can cleanſe me from this pollution. But indeed, Sir, I find every day more and more the truth of your words, "that I have "need to *watch always.*" I am ſet as it were in the midſt of ſnares, both friends and enemies conſpiring together to keep me from that humility which is ſo neceſſary to *one* who wiſhes to be *really* a *chriſtian.* My enemies lead to pride, by railing at me for what is, and *ought* to be, in one *ſenſe*, my glory; and my friends, by having too high an opinion of me. I think there is none, except yourſelf, who do

do not in *some measure* hurt me: and therefore, though I dare not call you *my* friend, as implying any particular attachment on your part, you are in fact, my truest and best friend. Praise I now dread as poison; and yet my temper is such as makes some encouragement necessary. Your behaviour to me is exactly fitted to preserve the balance of my mind even; a smile of approbation from you, is *that praise* which *encourages* without *endangering*. You will pardon my speaking so much of myself: a patient, you know, must fully lay open his case to his physician; and I have been emboldened even by you yourself, to increase the length of my letters. Oh may your blessed master reward you for all your labours in his service, and for all your goodness to

Your unworthy, though

ever-grateful and affectionate

* *

Let us go and do in like manner.
Lu. 10. 37.

Regard every man as our neighbour who needs our assistance.

Let us renounce that bigotry & party zeal wch wod contract our hearts into an insensibility for all ye human race but a small number whose sentiments & practices are so much our own that our love to them is but self-love reflected.

MEDI.

With an honest & truly christian openness of mind & heart let us always remember ye kindred between man & man, & cultivate that happy instinct whereby in ye original constitution of our nature our Creator has strongly bound us to each other. See Mr W's note on 1 Jn. 4 on the last Pa. of this Vol

MEDITATIONS

UPON SOME

Texts of Scripture.

See the foregoing Page.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

O My God, how fatally do I experience the truth of this assertion! My heart is indeed deceitful above all things; and how great is my sorrow on the melancholy reflection? Lord I have, by the deceitfulness and wickedness of my own heart, justly forfeited my title to the joys of eternity, incurred thy indignation, and made myself obnoxious to that dreadful sentence, *Depart ye cursed!* And how just this sentence, after the crimes my deceitful heart has betrayed me into; after the many good resolutions I have broke: after the sins of ingratitude, presumption, and repining, with which I have defiled my soul! How often have I resolved, firmly resolved, to keep a strict watch over my eyes and heart in the house of God, and let no thought have entrance which could prevent my addressing my Creator with the reverence I ought? But, merciful God! how contrary have I acted to all this! Have

not my eyes been amuſed by vanity, and my heart ſo diſtracted by idle and ridiculous ideas, that I have not known the words my lips pronounced? Nay, have not even unclean and blaſphemous thoughts attacked me at this ſacred time, and, wretch that I am! been indulged, or but coldly rejected? Horrible proof that my heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked! Lord I abhor myſelf, for having thus often, and thus heinouſly offended thee! I am utterly aſhamed and confounded at my daring, my monſtrous impiety! How ſhall I dare to hope for pardon of a ſin ſo frequently repeated, and with ſuch aggravations? When I conſider the greatneſs of my guilt, my aſtoniſhed ſoul is ready to ſink in black deſpair. Bleſſed God! I ſin againſt the cleareſt conviction, againſt the checks of my conſcience, and the kind admonitions of thy Holy Spirit; and, ſtrange perverſneſs! againſt all the hopes I have of happineſs, ſin againſt that God, whom I love and adore from my ſoul, and whoſe favour I would this moment lay down my life to procure. The thoughts of immortality, and the ſurprizing goodneſs of the Almighty in the works of creation and redemption fill my mind with gratitude and wonder: I am loſt in admiration, and could dwell for ever on the delightful theme. And yet, inconſiſtent wretch that I am! I go on to offend this divine author of my being, by my careleſs, ſupine, and irreverent addreſſes, and my wicked and fantaſtic thoughts. My prayers are turned into ſin: and now is it not preſumption, the higheſt preſumption, to hope for pardon? Or rather, would it not be a greater ſin than I have yet committed, to deſpair of it? Is not mercy the darling attribute of God? It is; and I embrace and adore that mercy: that mercy which is ſo freely offered to the worſt of ſinners: that mercy which is made ſure to us by the blood of a crucified Saviour. Oh my only refuge! my deareſt hope and everlaſting confidence! teach me words to expreſs the ſentiments

I have

I have of thee, and the abhorrence I have of my guilt. I deteſt myſelf, hate my vile ingratitude, and am fully convinced of my own weakneſs, and the vanity of my beſt reſolutions, without thy aſſiſting grace; Oh grant me that, for the ſake of my Redeemer; on that alone will I rely; never more will I truſt to the ſtrength of my own reaſon; I have found by dear experience, that I am folly and inconſtancy itſelf: without thy aid I am worſe than nothing, but with the bleſſing I emplore, I ſhall be more than conqueror. But is the ſin I have now been lamenting the only inſtance of the wickedneſs and deceitfulneſs of my heart? Alas! it is not: I have innumerable proofs of its treachery; every day, every hour brings ſome, and gives me new cauſe for grief and repentance. I reſolve frequently, no more to repine at the misfortunes I lie under; no more to look back with diſcontent, or forwards with diſtruſt. And theſe reſolutions I ſtrengthen, by reflections on the wiſdom of God; how much better he knows to chuſe for me, than I could for myſelf; and how unavailing impatience is under ills I cannot prevent. Then I conſider how ſmall my puniſhment is, in compariſon of what I deſerve, and ſhould ſuffer, was not the Almighty infinitely merciful; and what bleſſings afflictions are productive of, when received with humility and reſignation. And yet after all this, how often do I catch my deceitful heart breathing an impious ſigh, and by this ſecret complaint accuſing providence! How often are my eyes lift up, with a "Lord! why am I thus miſerable? Why, while "I ſee all around me gay and proſperous, muſt I "alone be unfortunate, and mourn without find-"ing one to pity me? What have I done to de-"ſerve the being diſappointed in every thing I "have ſet my affections on, and deceived by every "friend I have truſted?"—With this ſurprizing boldneſs have I dared to expoſtulate with my Maker; and yet his mercy ſtill allows me life and time

for repentance. Oh thou adorable Being! may I never more offend thee by a diſcontented word or thought: but grant that every faculty of my ſoul may be in perfect reſignation to thy will; and by this reſignation acquire that tranquillity and peace, which all the delights of the earth are not able to give.

Again. I reſolve every day to be perfectly eaſy under every little mortification I may meet in the common occurrences of life. How weak (I cry) is it to be affected by the folly or ill-nature of the world! Why ſhould I regard the ſneers of people, whoſe low ſentiments are only deſerving ſcorn and pity? Can the unreaſonable and unjuſt notions of another rob me of any real merit? Can an envious, a malicious, or a detracting ſpeech, do me any material injury, unleſs I give it force myſelf, by my impatience and want of temper? No certainly: nothing from without can hurt me, but by my own fault. A mind fortified with religion and philoſophy is proof againſt the darts of ſenſeleſs tattle, or ill-natured wit. Firm and collected within itſelf, it ſmiles ſuperior, and looks down on the ignorant and the malicious with pity.—Theſe reflections are juſt; and Oh that I could reduce them into practice! But here I miſerably fail. After my ſoul has plumed herſelf with theſe fine notions, and is ready to pronounce herſelf equal to every trial, ſhe ſinks in the moſt ſhameful manner. A word, a look, nay the very appearance of a ſlight, throws me into the greateſt uneaſineſs and confuſion; and though I can govern my temper enough to hide it from the world, my heart is ready to burſt with indignation. Strange weakneſs!—But why do I call it ſtrange? Am I not too well acquainted with the fatal cauſe of this, and almoſt every ſin I am guilty of? 'Tis vanity, that intolerable vanity, which mixes itſelf with all I act, or ſpeak, or think. When I look ſtrictly into my deceitful and wicked heart, I find it ſo full of this abominable vice, that

I regard

I regard myſelf with horror and amazement; and yet perhaps the next moment indulge in airy ſchemes and ſelf-complacency. Sure there is not in the whole univerſe ſo vain and ſinful a wretch as I am! What can I hope for? What can I expect? Will not eternal rejection from the preſence of God be juſtly my portion? Oh the thought of unutterable horror! My God! my only hope! can I think of being for ever caſt out from the light of thy countenance, and live? Why does not the dreadful idea at once put an end to my being? All the torments of damnation are ſummed up in theſe ſhocking words—Eternal rejection from thy preſence!—Oh gracious and adorable Being! let me not be thus beyond imagination curſed. In the name of my bleſſed Saviour I implore thy pity! Oh look with compaſſion on a ſoul which pants for grace and forgiveneſs! a ſoul ſenſible of her weak and polluted ſtate, and intirely relying on thy mercy. Oh ſpeak peace to this troubled ſea, and all ſhall be calm! Give me ſtrength to reſiſt thoſe temptations I ſo often ſink under! But above all, change this wicked and deceitful heart, and give me a new heart and a new ſpirit. Mortify in me all proud thoughts and vain opinions of myſelf, and let not the bleſſings thou haſt beſtowed upon me increaſe my condemnation, by being made motives for pride and vain glory. Hear and grant my requeſts, Oh ever-merciful God, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, our only Mediator and Redeemer. *Amen.*

1748.

Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refreſh you.

THESE, Oh compaſſionate Saviour, were thy words; this thy gracious call, and I obey it.

I come unto thee, Oh thou light of the world! for reſt, peace and everlaſting refreſhment. Wearied with treading the paths of folly and vanity; wearied with deceitful hopes and idle fears, and all the gay deluſions of this world, I come to thee for peace, and with full aſſurance of obtaining it. Aſſurance founded on thy promiſes; thoſe promiſes which are truth itſelf: merciful as thy own beneficent nature, and unalterable as thy being. Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but thy word ſhall never fail. Encouraged by this word, I come: not even the reflection of my abſolute unworthineſs ſhall keep me from thee. 'Tis to ſinners that this heavenly call is addreſſed: ſinners that labour under the heavy burden of their offence; and ſuch am I. The miſerable wretch who is chained to the oar, is not more weary of his ſlavery, than I am of my ſins: the ſins which ſo eaſily beſet me, and ſo often conquer my beſt reſolutions. Every hour I have new reaſon to lament my weakneſs, and to confeſs that thy grace is my only refuge. O let that grace, which has kept me from all infamous crimes, be alſo my preſervative againſt thoſe ſins of the mind, which, though hid from the ſhort-ſighted world, are all open to thee, and render my ſoul equally odious to the eye of heaven. Oh ſave me from myſelf! from my own proud thoughts and vain affections! I come to thee, bleſſed Jeſus, that I may have reſt: Oh give me that reſt! then ſhall all be perfect peace and harmony, and my ſoul ſhall feel no emotions but thoſe of joy and gratitude, eternal gratitude for my gracious and almighty benefactor.

This corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this mortal muſt put on immortality.

O H glorious and ever tranſporting thought! Sure and never failing remedy for all the troubles and

and diſappointments of life!—Incorruption and immortality! — Let me dwell on the charming words: they carry peace and everlaſting joy in the ſound. And yet how little can my ſoul underſtand of their full import, clogged by the weight of fleſh and blood? Darkened by this cloud of ſin and error, what true idea can ſhe form of incorruption? But if the faint ſhadow and diſtant proſpects affords ſuch delight, what will the full enjoyment give? Imagination is loſt in the dazzling reflection! All the ſcenes of this lower world vaniſh as a miſt before the ſun; and my elevated ſoul wholly abſorpt in contemplation of thoſe mighty bleſſings, ſeems to ſoar above the ſtars, and launch into the ſea of eternity. My God! My everlaſting hope! Great and adorable Creator of all things! Where ſhall I find words expreſſive of my wonder, my joy and gratitude? Thy mercy, thy free, and boundleſs mercy, from nothing called me into being, and made that being capable of an endleſs duration: formed me for eternity! And what raiſes the benefit infinitely higher, for an eternity of happineſs. Not the united power of men and devils can deprive me of this without my own conſent: and if I am miſerable I have no one to blame, except myſelf. O merciful God! I adore thee paſt all expreſſion, and the notions I have of thy divine attributes inſpire me with an unbounded confidence. Unworthy as I am of the leaſt of all thy mercies, I cannot but hope for the greateſt; and in the midſt of my continual offences, I look up to thee, as my friend, my only refuge and conſtant benefactor. When I grieve for my ſins, 'tis not from fear of puniſhment, but from the cutting reflection of my black ingratitude, in offending my Creator and preſerver, the God in whom I live, and move, and have my being; the God to whom I owe infinitely more than I can conceive; to whom I owe the glorious and the aſſured hopes of incorruption and immortality. And here again, O my ſoul, take wing, again loſe thyſelf in the

bliſsful

bliſsful proſpect! Think on the joy thou wilt feel when this corruptible ſhall have put on incorruption; when this companion (which in ſpite of the miſeries it betrays thee into, is ſtill dear and ſtill too tenderly beloved) ſhall become (inſtead of a clog, or a priſon) a vehicle pure and ethereal, perfectly fitted for all the purpoſes of thy enlarged faculties, and the completion of thy glory and happineſs. O bleſſed and deſirable re-union! State of permanent delight, and never fading joy! With what rapture does thy idea inſpire my ſoul! Fired by thoughts like theſe, I riſe far above the moſt glorious proſpects, earth, with all her boaſted varieties, can give. Pleaſures, riches, honours, what are ye all? Emptineſs and nothing — at the leaſt glimpſe of eternal day, how ye vaniſh into ſoft air! Loſt are all your ſhining toys; your painted glories intirely loſt! And Oh may their deluding ſhadows never return to darken my ſoul! May the God in whom I truſt, preſerve me from all their temptations; may his mercy ever protect and guide me, and bring me in the end to that ſtate of incorruption and immortality, which I hope for through the merits and mediation of our bleſſed Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

Then Peter *ſaid, Now know I that God is no reſpecter of perſons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him.*

THIS text is ſo ſtrong a proof of the unreaſonableneſs and folly of national or religious prejudices, that one would imagine it ſhould intirely baniſh thoſe odious and pernicious principles from the whole chriſtian world. But daily experience too plainly diſcovers the contrary; and the very people

people who would be thought to have the greateſt zeal for the good of ſouls, are of all others the readieſt to condemn thoſe who diſſent from them. 'Tis a common (though falſe aſſertion) of libertines that prieſts of all religions are the ſame; but they might truly affirm, that bigots of all religions are the ſame, equally deſtructive of the peace of their fellow-creatures, and the laws of civil ſociety. What wild havock, what horrid ſcenes of blood and ſlaughter, have been produced by miſtaken zeal and blind prejudice? The hiſtories of former times abound with ſhocking inſtances of this kind; and ſtrange inconſiſtency! The perſecuted party have no ſooner got the upper hand, but they have, with the power, aſſumed the ſpirit of their perſecutors, and been guilty of the very acts of injuſtice they had ſo loudly exclaimed againſt. 'Tis true, the degrees and kinds of perſecution differ, according to the particular notions of the ſects or the particular laws of the ſtates where it is practiſed; but perſecution, in whatever ſhape or degree, is ſtill perſecution, and proceeds from that ſpirit of prejudice and bigotry which makes us look on God as a reſpecter of perſons, and on all thoſe who differ from us as his enemies, and conſequently, deſerving nothing at our hands but contempt and cruelty. Thus the furious *Roman Catholic* brands with the name of heretic, all who are without the pale of his church, purſues them with fire and ſword in this world, and ſentences them to eternal puniſhment in the next; and the ſtanch ſour *Proteſtant* devoutly expatiates on the crying ſin of idolatry, never thinks of the pope without joining with him antichriſt and the devil, abſolutely pronounces the church of *Rome* to be the whore of *Babylon*, and expects (with great chriſtian charity) that in a few ages more ſhe and all her members will be ſwallowed up in the bottomleſs pit, the lake of fire and brimſtone. Nay, the bigots of (even) the little trifling ſects into which the reformed religion is ſubdivided, all agree to damn each other,

other, and wholly to appropriate to thoſe of their own denomination, the title of God's church, and God's choſen. — Surprizing narrowneſs of ſoul! Worſe than *Jewiſh* ſtupidity! They had ſome excuſe for their arrogancy: the particular manner in which providence had diſtinguiſhed them from the reſt of the world, ſeemed to be ſome foundation for their pride to build on; and 'tis not to be wondered that the dark ſhadow of the law ſhould obſcure the principle of univerſal benevolence. But that people under the glorious diſpenſation of the goſpel, men who pretend to be followers of that Jeſus whoſe whole life was a ſcene of moderation and charity, who laid down his life for his enemies, and prayed for his murderers: in a word, that chriſtians ſhould deſpiſe, hate, and perſecute their fellow-chriſtians, is a conſideration equally melancholly and amazing! Miſtaken men! Is then the great Creator of the univerſe, the preſerver of all his creatures, the God of mercy, who would not that any one ſhould periſh, is this adorable being a reſpecter of perſons? Is his juſtice to be biaſſed by your fooliſh diſtinctions? Or his mercy leſſened by your uncharitable judgments? In vain you would make the Almighty a party in your quarrel, and pretend to be fighting his cauſe! He diſclaims ſuch furious champions; nor will true religion allow of defenders, who are deſtroying the moſt glorious part of her ſyſtem, that principle of univerſal charity, which in the apoſtolical times was the diſtinguiſhing mark of chriſtianity. It was then ſaid, See how theſe chriſtians love one another! But now (ſad contraſt!) ſee how theſe chriſtians hate one another! Oh bleſſed and ever-merciful God! look down with compaſſion on the deplorable ſtate of the chriſtian world! See how thy church is laid waſte and rent aſunder, by the fraud, malice, or blind zeal of particular men: in one place over-run by ſuperſtition, in another undermined by ſcepticiſm; and every where robbed of her primitive peace and purity. Oh reſtore that purity!

purity! Reſtore that peace! Heal her breaches, reform her ſuperſtitions, and grant that we may, with one heart and one mind, with univerſal love and unbounded charity to our fellow-creatures, and a firm and lively faith in our bleſſed Redeemer, adore thee the only true God; and, after a life of piety and virtue, attain one of unalterable glory and happineſs. *Amen.*

O God thou art my God! early will I ſeek thee.

WHEN we are deprived of all the joys of life, betrayed by thoſe we truſted, forſaken by our friends, triumphed over by our enemies, and robbed of our deareſt hopes, where and to whom muſt we go for relief? What comfort can be hoped in a condition ſo deſperate — Will reflection on the paſt give us eaſe? —— Alas! it makes our wounds ſtill deeper; and every remembrance of the treachery of our friends, or the malice of our enemies, draws a new ſigh from the oppreſt and aching heart, and a freſh tear from the ſinking eye. —— Shall we look forwards? — All dark and gloomy is the proſpect, and the mind, wearied with affliction and wholly depreſt by grief and diſappointments, ſhudders at the thought of launching again into the ſea of deluſions, of again truſting, and being again deceived. In circumſtances ſo deplorable, nothing can calm our grief, nothing afford us one moment's peace, but ſeeking early after God; and happy! thrice happy! that ſoul, which can ſay with the royal *Pſalmiſt, O God! thou art my God, my refuge in all my diſtreſſes, my only hope, and everlaſting peace!*—A man who can look up to the great author of nature with a confidence like this, who can ſeek after God with full aſſurance of finding him, and in him a ſure

relief

relief for all the troubles and miſeries of life, is ſuperior to all events, and may be happy in the moſt terrible afflictions. Is he deprived of his eſtate, reduced to a deſpiſed and unrelieved poverty? He is ſtill rich in the pleaſing hopes, that his God will one day beſtow on him a glorious and never-failing inheritance. Is he by death robbed of his deareſt friends? His grief is immediately calmed, by the thoughts of that eternal ſtate to which he is every moment approaching, and where he will meet thoſe dear objects of his tenderneſs, never, never to be parted from them more. Is his reputation made a ſacrifice to ſpite and calumny, and himſelf condemned, reviled, and hated, by his acquaintance? Still true to his principles, and firm in his truſt on the Almighty, he braves the ſtorm, and with joy looks forward to that day, when his accuſers ſhall be covered with ſhame and confuſion, and his innocence declared in the ſight of men and angels. Is he betrayed by thoſe he truſted with an unbounded confidence, by thoſe who were dear to him as himſelf, and for whoſe life he would freely have paid his own? Even in this affliction (which is of all others the moſt grating to human nature) he is ſtill maſter of himſelf, and poſſeſſing his ſoul in patience and reſignation, looks up to that friend who will never deceive him, to that God who is truth itſelf. Convinced of the folly of placing his love and truſt on creatures, he fixes it wholly on the eternal Creator, and acknowledges with ſincerity the mercy of God, in thus graciouſly releaſing his heart from thoſe deluding ties, which had ſo often drawn him from the centre of the true happineſs, the end of his being. Thus bleſſed is he, who can ſay with faith, gratitude, and humility, *O God, thou art my God!* —Grant, Oh moſt adorable and omnipotent Being! grant me this glorious privilege! I have nothing more to aſk. That thou art my God, is a bleſſing infinitely greater than the whole creation can beſtow;

bestow; infinitely beyond all I can ask or conceive. Possessed of this, I can defy the combined malice of men and devils. Welcome distress, poverty, disappointment, and affliction of all kinds, even what I have most dreaded! Welcome all, if it is the will of heaven! What hurt are ye capable of doing me, while I can say to the rock of ages, "Thou art my God?" And certainly, Oh thou fountain of life and author of all good, 'tis thy gracious will that I should thus address thee; else why this firm reliance on thee in all my afflictions? Why this intire confidence on thy mercy and goodness, in the midst of my sufferings? How often, when my heart has been sinking under a load of sorrow, have I found relief and comfort, by applying to thee? In troubles which I have thought impossible to be endured, thou hast been my support; and when at any time I have been tempted to discontent, and dared to murmur and complain, how quickly has thy grace inspired me with remorse for my impiety, and enabled me to make a new act of resignation to thy providence! Sure and infallible proofs that thou art my God! And Oh may I never repay those instances of thy compassion and tender mercy with ingratitude! Never more distrust the power which has so often delivered me! But grant, Almighty Father, that in all the trials thou hast allotted me in this mortal state, I may seek thee early, and in seeking thee find all the blessings thou hast promised, peace and perfect tranquillity in this life, and everlasting joy and happiness in the next! These favours, these blessings I emplore in the name, and for the sake of my merciful Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

If ye salute yr friends only, what do you more than others? Mat. 5. 46, 47.

Our Ld probably glances at those prejudices wch different Sects had agst each other, & intimates, yt he would not have his followers imbibe that narrow spirit. Would to GOD this had been more attended to, among ye many Divisions & subdivisions into wch the Church is

EXTRACT

EXTRACT

FROM A

LITTLE DIARY.

JANUARY 5, 1754-5. Glory to the God of boundleſs mercy, who has this day, when ſinking under great heavineſs both of ſoul and body, lifted up the light of his countenance upon me, and made me drink deep of his redeeming love.—Oh ſweeteſt and moſt compaſſionate Jeſus! how do thy tender mercies follow and ſupport my ſoul; and ſtill I am ungrateful, and ſtill I am not as thou wouldſt have me to be! Oh when wilt thou make a full end of ſin, and bring in thy perfect righteouſneſs? All things are poſſible to thee; and do I not know, do I not *taſte* that thou art gracious! Oh my ſun, my ſhield, life of my life, look into my heart; I dare appeal to thine all-ſearching eye, that there is nothing ſo dear to it, but I would this moment part with it for thee! And why then, deareſt Lord, wilt thou not form thy whole bleſſed image in my ſoul? My unworthineſs I know is greater than that of any other creature in the univerſe; but this unworthineſs will the more magnify thy mercy. I have only my unworthineſs to plead; and I have no hope but in thine atoning blood: Oh let this blood, which has bought my peace, cleanſe me alſo from every

enumbled! And that we may at leaſt advance ſo far, as cordially to embrace our Brethren in Chr. of whatever party or denomination they are! B. H.

every ſin; and let that bleſſed Spirit, who has ſealed and witneſſed this *peace* to my ſoul, be now a ſpirit of burning, to conſume all my droſs, and to purify me even as — Oh glorious proſpect, heart-enlivening hopes, let me ſink into the duſt before thee! God of glory, God of purity, I am loſt in ſelf-abaſement! But haſt thou not promiſed? And wilt thou not fulfil thine own gracious word? Oh give me then perfect ſanctification of body, ſoul, and ſpirit; and let this heavy croſs which ſeems now coming upon me, be, by thine all-powerful grace, turned into a means of forwarding thy bleſſed work in my ſoul. Let every bitter cup which thou permitteſt to be given me, be joyfully received, as ſerving in ſome degree to conform me to thy ſufferings; and let me in all things, though ever ſo contrary to my corrupt nature, give thanks, and ſay continually, Lord not my will, but thine be done. *Amen.*

We in this life don't ſeek for eaſe,
Or what is call'd conveniences;
But as one who is ſojourning,
Or as a traveler at Inn;
We're ſatisfy'd with all things as they come,
Having our eye-mark conſtantly at Home.

FINIS.

Lord give me wisdom to walk in thy ways
I ask nor riches nor yet length of days!
Sarah Eliſabetha Bithia Brewer.
July 21. 1772.

Charity, or Love.

Charity (in its full import) in the soul of man, is the very picture of the godhead, taken as it stands in ye fairest light. Wisdom & holiness, power, sovereignty & justice are various features of ye deity: they are indeed his very essence; yet ye scripture rather chuses to express, that God is Love; & yt twice in one chapter, 1 Jno. 4. 8, 16. The beloved disciple took peculiar delight in ye contemplation of God, under this character. This appears in his gospel as well as in his Epistles. The other glories of that infinite beauty shine with awful beams, & command my reverence: But methinks, I love to look upon so glorious a Being in his most condescending air, & to converse with him in his mildest & most inviting aspect.

15 JY 64

Charity in man is a grace of that alluring sweetness, that my pen would fain be attempting to write something in favour of it: I find a strange pleasure in discoursing of this virtue, hoping that my very soul may be moulded into its divine likeness. I would have it look thro my eyes continually, & it shd be ever ready upon my lips to soften every expression of my tongue. I would dress myself in it as my best raiment. I would put it on my faith & hope; not so as entirely to hide them, but as an upper & more visible vesture, constantly to appear in before men.

This commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his Brother — every one, whatever his opinions or mode of worship be, purely because he bears the image of God.

Bigotry is properly the want of this pure & universal love. A Bigot only loves those who embrace his opinions & receive his way of worship. ~~[illegible]~~

~~[illegible]~~

1 Jno. 4. 21.

A Prayer on Whitsunday.

Lord God Holy Ghost! Here are a few of thy poor people, wch thy Holy Jesus has redeemed by his own most precious blood, & purchased to be his property, lye before thee in the dust, adore thee, & thank thee for all ye care & blessing & careful tuition thou hast hitherto bestowed upon us. We are full of shamefacedness because thou hast discovered to us our misery & sinfulness; but full of gratitude also, for thy manifestation unto us the inestimable riches of grace in God our Sav^r, & vouchsafe for ye sake of Jesus bloody merits & death to come & dwell within ye souls & bodies of us poor sinners. What are we! that thou hast called us to thy Fellowship! O it is ye bloody sacrifice of J. offered upon the altar of the cross, wch causeth thee to be thus gracious unto us. The Sav^r hath red & acknowledged us as his. It was but — — that he again fed us, as members of his body, wth his own h. flesh & blood! We pray thee continue unmeasuredly to work in us thy poor children, & to form us all to ye mind of G.D. — We confess unto thee our misery, poverty, & various deviations, & unfaithfulnesses. We have not hitherto been good & obedient children. Frequently have we been inattentive to thy sacred voice, & have followed our own opt more than thy most admonitions. But o pardon all wherein we have hitherto grieved thee! Pardon us for the sake of ye precious sacrifice blood of thy S. Withdraw not from us; but from this day receive us, & all ye souls connected wth us thro' ye same faith in Jesus most holy & most perfect oblation & satisfaction, anew; & let thy grace & favr remain wth us till we breath forth our opt & last joy wth him to inherit. Behold we are here, & vow to thee new faithfulness & child like obedience. We give ourselves wholly unto thee, & will thro grace readily obey thy voice in all things. Our souls & all our members we devote anew to be thy temple. O make chast our souls, & render our bodies more conformable to ye h. corpse

of JESUS. Thou fain wouldst have us cleaner in heart & in demeanour. This we perceive & own. Deign yr for J. sake to cleanse, anoint, & adorn us anew, & to render us an h. people, sprinkled wth ye blood of J. & endowd wth his mind. And as thou on ye day of Pentecost didst descend upon ye Apls & Witnesses of our Ld, & fit them out wth thy gifts & powers for yr function even so, Ld Hlgt grant us grace, & gifts, & power to execute ye council of Peace of our L.J.C. upon earth. With this view also, we give ourselves unto thee this day, that thou mayest prepare us, & use us as witnesses in our stations of ye death & suffgs of our JESUS. Vouchsafe to accept us as we are. Let thy Peace & Blessd rest upon us in rich measure for his sake who died for our sins, & rose again for our justification, & is prepar'd places for us in ye mansions of his glory, & promised to send thee to us to be with us to ye end of the world to bless us thus in his name! Amen.

An Hymn on the same. T. 18.

To God the Holy Ghost we pray,
Who points us out the gospel-way,
That he those precious gifts bestow
Which once did his blessd Ones o'erflow!

All glory, pow'r and praise is thine,
Sweet Comforter, who didst incline
Our hearts, when by the Father drawn,
To hear glad tidings of the Son!

A stranger he to ev'ry one
Before that sin to him is shewn,
(Which more than any crime confounds)
Believing not on JESUS wounds,

Which full forgiveness did procure,
Salvation stedfast and secure,
Since Christ th'eternal ransom paid,
When all our sins on him were laid.

* All Christians are called unto this s. Ps. Ps. Mes. 1. 8. And Dr Luther says, We shd all of us, be Priests & Priestesses. Each has a call to bear witness of ye power of ye blood of JESUS!

As

As soon as this our case we felt,
That unbelief within us dwelt
And (owning our lost wretched case)
With tears from thee begd faith & grace;

Most kindly thou didst us receive,
And our distressed hearts relieve.
For what we of Immanuel know
To thy instructions all we owe.

Now let us in thy School remain,
Till we the Father's throne attain!
Be to our souls a faithful guide:
In trials fierce with us abide:

The heav'nly Father's sweetest name
Sweetly in ev'ry heart proclaim;
(Let Abba soon, the Childlike cry,
As Echo to that voice reply!)

Th' incarnate WORD fill up the soul;
Thou for thy dwelling fit the whole!
Thy witness to our spirits bear,
"My Residence, my Temple's here!"

Another. T. 61, or 13.

I bow before the Father's throne;
With equal awe before Thee fall,
Thou true Son of the living One,
Appointed Lord & Heir of all!
Appointed, since thy bloody fight,
To call & draw the sons of men,
Thy property by justest right,
Since bought with agony & pain.

To

To [illegible] be praise,
Who [illegible] a wretch to be;
And helpd me thro attract^g grace,
The Fathers lov^g heart to see:
Wch for so many years my heart
With cords of love unweared drew,
And now, by ev'ry way & art,
Strives to compleat the Creature new.

Thanks for all this, Ed^l Friend!
And for all yt wch I forget
And all I cannot comprehend,
For thou'rt unfathomably great:
When I thy love astonishd see,
What lengths, breadths, depths & heights arise!
Eternity, Immensity,
These are its boundaries!

Myself I to thee, L^d of Love!
Therefore devote, as wholly thine;
I wish each talent to improve,
That it may answer thy design:
But Thou neter let my poor soul fall
Out of thy arms embraces,
Early and late do nought at all
But shew thy tender Mercies!

T 13.

O Thou the Fairest of mankind!
Thy Beauty strikes both heart & mind;
Yet nothing is so fair in thee,
As thy sweet Form upon the Tree.

15 JY 64

Thy Cross whenever it appears,
Soon melts yt hardest heart to tears:
Its virtue no one can express;
Who feels it, he feels Happiness.
Away, ye Painters, wth yr art!
The Spirit paints within the heart;
Draws to the life the bloody tree,
And lets us it, in spirit see.

In every action I can say, I do this with the Ld. Evil has not any power to hurt me, it would, but Grace is superior, & JESUS is Love.

a/